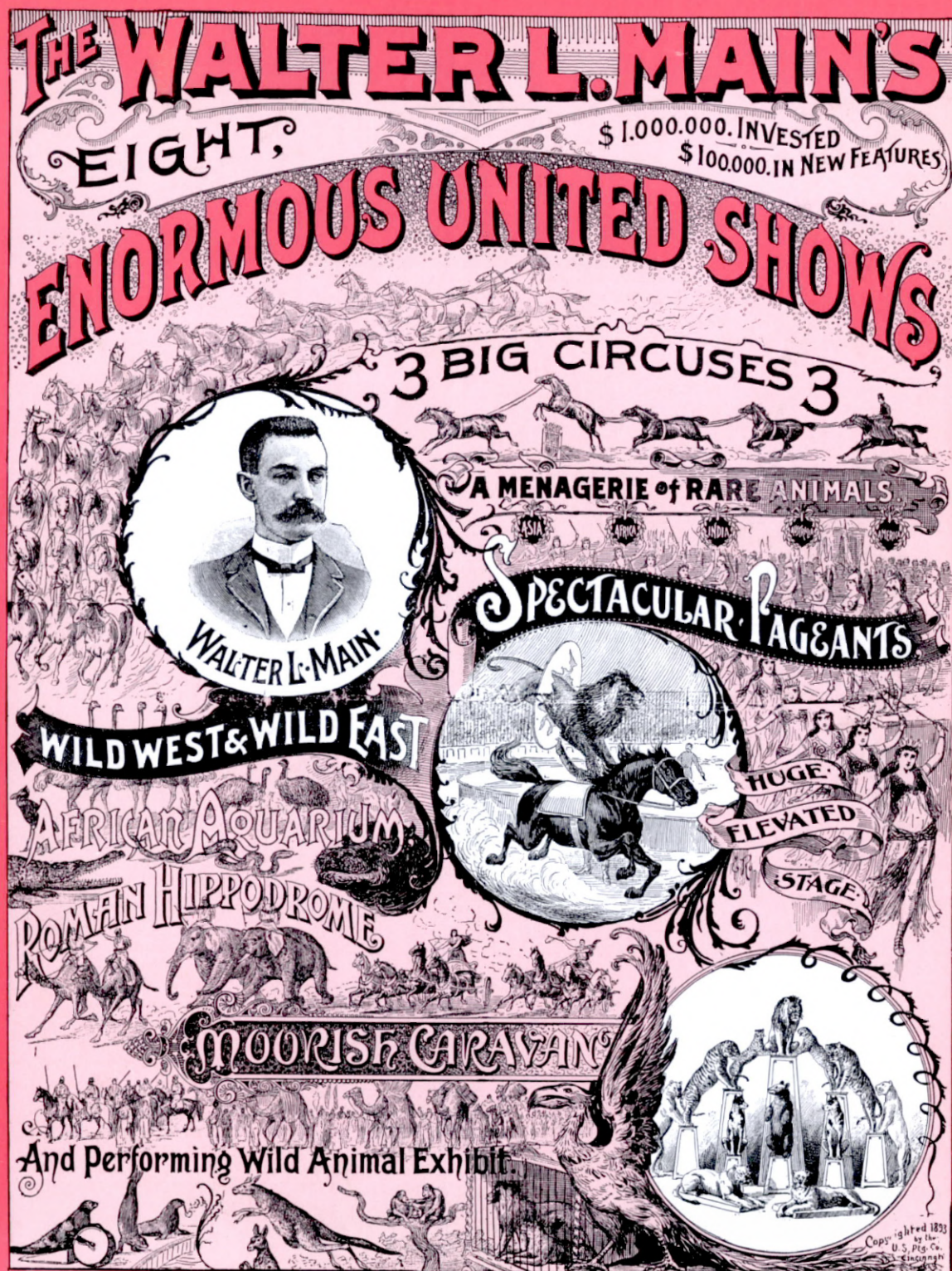


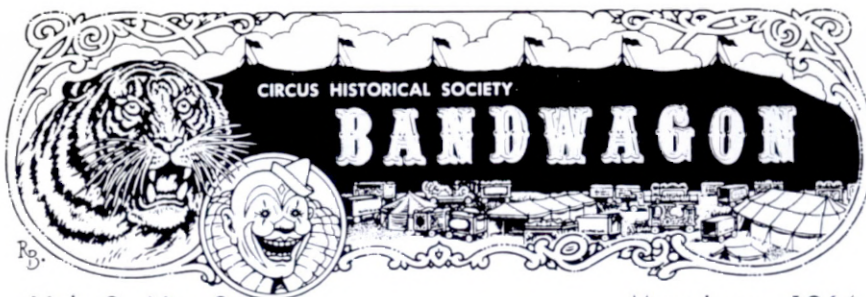
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HUGE ELEVATED STAGE
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Vol. 8, No. 3

May-June, 1964

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Tom Parkinson, Associate Editor

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THIS MONTH'S COVER

Walter L. Main first used his name as a circus title in 1885. By 1893 his show had grown to a medium size major railroad circus, with 29 cars.

The Walter L. Main's Eight Enormous United Shows was the imposing title he used on the cover of the newspaper courier shown on the cover.

Photos of the famous Main wreck in Tyronne, Penna., on May 30, 1893, show a slight variation to the title. Walter L. Main's All New Monster Shows appears on the flats.

The drawing on the courier was done by E. Roe for the United States Printing Co. of Cincinnati. The courier is from the Pfening Collection.

1964 DUES NOW DUE

You will be receiving your 1964 dues notice soon. Why not forward your \$5.00 for the year starting May 1, to Don F. Smith, Treasurer, today.

THE PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

The membership campaign is progressing nicely with about 15 new members since my last communication. I hope that we will have at least 50 by the end of June which will be one fourth of our two year goal. We deeply appreciate the attention many members are giving to this most vital program. Director Freddie Daw has pledged to recruit 25 new members during the coming year and other members are also exerting maximum effort.

Editor Pfening and I appreciate the many fine letters that have come from the membership expressing their satisfaction and praise of the last issue of Bandwagon. Very shortly I will be in consultation with the Board of Directors getting their views on the character and material being presented in the Bandwagon and I shall report my

findings in this column at a later date.

Don Smith, founder, and currently treasurer is preparing an article giving the history of the first 25 years of the Circus

Historical Society. This article will appear in Bandwagon and will be of vast interest to all and especially to the newer members.

Elsewhere in this issue you will find the finalized plans for this years convention to be held at Delavan, Wis. July 4-6. The committee has worked hard to prepare a most interesting program. All members attending will be expected to register and pay the necessary but very reasonable registration fee. You can be assured of enjoying the finest convention the Society has ever had. We have purposely tried to crowd in just as many attractions for your pleasure and enjoyment as we could. A few weeks ago I caught the Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus at Macon, Georgia and found it to have the strongest performance in my opinion the show ever had. Bandwagon of course has kept you informed of the many new wagons that will appear in this years big parade in Milwaukee. I am hoping that we will break all previous records for convention attendance. Please try and make it.

Planning for the 1965 convention starts immediately upon conclusion of the one at Delavan. In order that everyone may express his opinion as to when and where the 1965 convention should be held I earnestly invite each of you to write me your ideas. In this way I will be able to learn the thinking on the matter from the entire membership, not just the officers and directors. So let me hear from you. I will put an entire year of thought and planning into the 1965 convention.

Don't forget that 1964 dues were due on May 1. If you have not paid yours as yet please do so immediately.

NEW MEMBERS

- No. 1296 Harry Hammond
803 N. Huntley Drive
Hollywood 69, Calif.
- No. 1297 Richard B. Bronson
MBR Box 72
Bangor, Maine
- No. 1298 John A. Burns
430 W. Camino Real
Arcadia, Calif.
- No. 1299 Howard G. Numbers
14200 South Wabash
Riverdale 27, Illinois
- No. 1300 Charles L. Shaffer
305 S. Girard St.
Woodbury, N.J.
- No. 1301 Kent C. Danner
3135 Hidalgo Drive
San Bernardino, Calif.
- No. 1302 L. Strock Rupert
299 Taylor Rd.
Mansfield, Ohio
- No. 1303 Richard H. Lane
82 North Adams St.
Mansfield, Ohio
- No. 1304 Benjamin R. Barnes, Jr.
836 Vickory Ave.
Johnstown, Pa. 15905
- No. 1305 Dr. O. R. Rice
R.R. 1
Delavan, Wisc. 53115
- No. 1306 Albert A. David
1305 Carlisle Ave.
Racine, Wisc. 53404
- No. 1307 Ephraim J. Carlisle
307 N. Pearl St.
Bridgeton, New Jersey
- No. 1308 Glen Unholz
217 West Park
Wheaton, Illinois
- No. 1309 Robert W. Briggs
1031 S. Del Mar
San Gabriel, Calif.

DELAVAN, WIS., 1964 CHS CONVENTION SITE—JULY 4, 5, 6

The 1964 Convention Committee believes the attractions of our 1964 convention to involve a rare opportunity for our membership. The Milwaukee Circus Parade, Ringling-Barnum Circus, Beatty-Cole Circus, the Circus heritage of the City of Delavan, Wis., and the 25th anniversary of the CHS—this combination of events and occasions is unrivaled in the annals of the conventions of any of the circus fan societies. For this reason, we could not resist the temptation of assigning our 1964 convention to Wisconsin.

We also recognize, however, that the very complexity of events creates special problems, as does the date of the convention, involving a national holiday, the 4th of July. We trust that our members will recognize the assets of these wonderful attractions all combined into one, and that they will bear with us in the necessary problems involved.

With the events in Milwaukee, plus the seasonal impact upon the Wisconsin vacationland, we must recognize the congested lodging and dining situation that will exist. Every effort to make advance reservations must be taken.

We have centered our lodging and dining plans in Delavan to escape the congested

35mm CIRCUS SLIDES
Ringling, Cole, Beers-Barnes, Mills, Hagen, Kelly-Miller, Cristiani, Barnum & Bailey, etc. Lot scenes, trains, personnel, wagons, etc. Thousands in stock. Send 10c for lists.

AL HALPERN
Bali Hai 922 S. Park Circle
ANAHEIM, CALIFORNIA

1964 CONVENTION INFORMATION

conditions of Milwaukee arising from the parade. Last year, many of us experienced waits of two hours before being served supper, after the parade, and for this reason, we have scheduled our Saturday smorgasbord in Delavan.

Bus transportation between Delavan and Milwaukee will be available. It is suggested that as many as possible who come by auto, come first to Delavan, and commute to Milwaukee by bus to avoid the complexities of traffic and parking. This bus service will be included in your convention registration. Those who come directly to Milwaukee by train or plane, can register at the headquarters tent in Milwaukee, then utilize the bus to transport themselves to Delavan. Those who for their own reasons, wish to utilize their own automobiles, and take lodging in Milwaukee Friday night, are, of course, at liberty to do so, but we judged it wise to make the bus available for those who would find it helpful.

It is suggested that those who register at the Pfister Hotel, between 9:30 and 11 A.M., write a check for the registration fee. We would prefer not to handle large quantities of cash under the limited security-conditions that would exist there.

Although Friday the 3rd is not officially scheduled on our convention agenda, events that day are worth noting to those who can arrive early to take advantage of them. Ringling-Barnum performance in Milwaukee will be available on the 3rd, but the one July 4th performance is closed only to employees and guests of the Schlitz Company. Throughout the day of Friday, teams will be practicing with their wagons on the streets of Milwaukee. This is a wonderful event for fans to witness, and the best opportunity for picture taking under less stressed circumstances. Registration will begin in Delavan at the Colonial Hotel at 7:00 PM Friday, and the opportunity will exist Friday night for leisurely socializing and bull-sessions between old and new circus friends.

Bring some of your circsiana to share with the members.

There will be hitches and snags in such a tight schedule, but we will do our best to minimize them. We know we will have your cooperation, as we also know many wonderful events are scheduled for your pleasure. See you in Wisconsin!

1964 Convention Committee
W. Gordon Yadon
Fred D. Pfening, Jr.
Bob Parkinson, Chairman

1964 Convention Circus Historical Society SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

FRIDAY JULY 3rd, 1964

Milwaukee, Wis.

All day — test runs by teams and wagons. Excellent photo opportunities.

Milwaukee, Wis.

Ringling-Barnum Performances (not included in registration fee.)

Delavan, Wis.

7:00 PM Convention Registration, Colonial Hotel.

Evening hours — Informal gathering CHS members, bull sessions, enjoyment of such circsiana as members bring, Tours of Circus Room of Library, Art Exhibit, historic circus cemetery of Delavan, Wis.

SATURDAY JULY 4th, 1964

Delavan, Wis.

8:30 AM Bus leaves for Milwaukee for CHS members. (*)

Milwaukee, Wis.

9:30 AM to 11 AM Convention Registration. Lobby of Pfister Hotel.

10:30 AM (about) bus arrives at circus parade assembly area.

8:00 AM — 2:00 PM Assembly of circus parade.

2:00 PM — about 5:00 PM The big parade.

5:30 PM — Bus leaves for Delavan, Wis. (*)

Delavan, Wis.

8:00 PM — 10:00 PM Smorgasbord at Colonial Hotel. (*)

10:00 PM — 11:00 PM Brief Meeting, special program.

NOTE: Ringling Barnum performance Saturday AM not open to public.

SUNDAY JULY 5th, 1964

Delavan, Wis.

Delavan Churches open to members.

10:00 AM 2nd tour of Delavan cemetery.

All morning — on the lot of Clyde Beatty Circus

2:30 — 4:30 PM Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus (matinee only) *

4:30 — 6:00 PM Beatty circus tear-down and load up.

Evening — Free boat rides on Lake Delavan courtesy local committee.

— Informal socializing, bull sessions
— Art Exhibit

MONDAY JULY 6th

Delavan, Wis.

9:00 AM — Noon Business meeting

Noon — Ladies luncheon, Tiger Lounge, \$1.40 (not included in Reg. fee.)

1:15 PM — 3:00 PM or as needed; business meeting, and round table of interesting circus personages.

Adjournment.

*All events so identified are included in the registration fee.



SPECIAL NOTICE AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR MILWAUKEE PARADE

The Public is invited to the assembly area up until 9:30 PM Friday July 3. On the Fourth the entire area will be closed to the public and to traffic. Only those with proper credentials will be admitted to the assembly area.

A special pass will be issued to all CHS members that are registered for the convention. This pass will allow members in the assembly area after the public has been

excluded. NO CHS MEMBERS WILL BE ADMITTED TO THE AREA WITHOUT THIS SPECIAL PASS.

CHS members registering in Delavan on the third of July will receive their pass at that time. Members may also register for the convention between 9:30 and 11:00 AM on July 4, in the lobby of the Pfister Hotel in Milwaukee. The convention committee will be at the Pfister at that time ONLY for Milwaukee convention registration. It will not be possible to register in the parade area on July 4.

Through the cooperation of the Circus World Museum and Schlitz, registered CHS conventioners will be included as authorized personnel, and shall be identified with passes that the police shall recognize.

It is evident that, with this privilege, comes considerable responsibility on the part of all of us — a responsibility to in all events, yield to the persons that are performing necessary duties connected with the parade.

During this period, the following rules will be self-imposed upon all CHS conventioners;

- (1) All CHS conventioners shall remain off the streets, behind the curbs, and in no way obstruct the streets.
- (2) No CHS member shall enter the streets for the purpose of taking photographs, and shall not ask any parade participant to stop to pose for photographs. Such photography shall take place previous to this stage of the parade assembly, or shall be limited solely to such photography as can be carried out from off-street positions and without interfering with parade personnel.
- (3) Where a conventioner wishes to cross the street to the other side, he shall do so quickly, and at a location of minimum parade activity.
- (4) Such CHS members, their families, or other registered conventioners as take advantage of this privilege, and remain in the staging area after the police have cleared it, shall do so at their own risk, and in recognition of their roll as guests, and waive any and all rights of recourse against any persons, organizations, cooperations, institutions, governmental agencies or any other parties whatsoever associated with the events of the day, holding same harmless from any responsibility that may arise from occurrences or alleged occurrences in the proximity of the privileged area involved.
- (5) Officers of the Circus Historical Society shall police their membership and reserve the right to rescind this privilege to any flagrant violator amongst its membership; or to rescind the privilege, if necessary, to the entire membership. If necessary, CHS officers shall summon aid from city police.
- (6) Special note is taken, that a committee of Circus Fans Assn. of America is assigned certain duties in connection with preparing the parade. In such cases as CHS members will also be serving with this CFA work committee, these rules for CHS conventioners shall not be construed so as to interfere with the duties assigned to such persons.

"Memories of My Days in the Circus Ring 1920-1957"

By JORGEN M. CHRISTIANSEN
As told to my wife, Edna Curtis
Christiansen

INTRODUCTION By ROBERT D. GOOD

Fond memories take me back 40 years to a matinee performance of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum Bailey Circus in the old Madison Square Garden in New York City.

Midway in the performance Fred Bradna's shrill whistle signaled the start of the big Liberty Horse number and a meticulously groomed smiling gentlemen in black formal attire ran into the center ring, bowed to the audience, then turned and cracked his long ring whip.

To the strains of the Spanish March "Gallito", twenty four spirited Liberty horses dashed into the ring—6 blacks, 6 dappled grays, 6 sorrels, and 6 bays, and were expertly cued through intricate, flawless routine by the smiling trainer. It was an outstanding display of superior horsemanship and showmanship, and for sheer magnitude and excellent presentation I have not seen its equal to this day.

Such was my introduction to an impressive and remarkable personality—JORGEN M. CHRISTIANSEN, the Ringling's newly imported Liberty Horse trainer and his snappy 24 Horse Act fresh from their European triumphs.

During the ensuing summers on the road, and Winters at the old Bridgeport winter quarters we became well acquainted through our mutual love of horses. At the training sessions at Bridgeport one had an insight into the vast amount of hard work and extreme patience necessary to create an act of this kind. Standing beside Merle Evan's Band Stand I loved to



No. 1—Dog act trained by Christiansen in Moscow in 1918 and presented by his wife 1918-26. The act was billed as Madam A. Strakai's Siberian Spitz Dogs. This photo was taken in 1921. Authors Collection.

watch Christiansen's masterful handling of his 24 horses.

Christiansen displayed the ultimate in his ability to handle animals when he developed his 75 Exotic Animal Tableau Act for the Ringlings in which 39 horses, 27 ponies, 5 camels, and 4 zebras took part. All of these worked in the center ring with the trainer at the top of a pyramidal circular stairs, and the animals going in alternating concentric circles, on the stairs, in the ring, and on the ring curb. The 5 camels stood on 10 elephant tubs spaced around the ring while 11 dappled gray horses ran under the camel's bellies. The act was used in the new Madison Square Garden for one season.

No. 2—Christiansen's 24 horse Liberty Act, Ringling-Barnum Circus, 1925, at Chicago. Act consisted of 6 blacks, 6 grays, 6 sorrells, and 6 bays. Christiansen worked the act for seasons 1924 through 1927 on the show. Author's Collection.

Several years later after leaving Ringlings, Christiansen had his own 8 Creamoline Stallions Liberty Act and I had the pleasure of trouping with him for a time. The Creamolines were probably the first Palominos broke for Liberty and played in Parks, Fairs, Horse Shows, etc. traveling by railroad in a Palace Horse Car.

The Creamolines attracted great attention everywhere, and were noted for their beauty, spirit, and perfection in executing unusually difficult routines.

Some years later Christiansen broke a fine 24 Palomino Liberty Horse Act for the Cole Bros. Circus, and still later for himself another 10 Horse Liberty Act of Argentine Criollo horses, a very unusual and colorful breed of horse. His exotic "Story Book" animal act was his success in his later years as a trainer.

For almost 40 years Christiansen presented his wonderful acts in the center rings of all the major circuses in America, and at Parks, Fairs, Horse Shows and other big celebrations. Few people stop to realize that behind all the glamor and public acclaim there is a great amount of patience, sacrifice, heartbreak, humane kindness, and great physical energy necessary to produce such remarkable and unusual acts.

It is indeed my pleasure and privilege to express my esteem and pay tribute to a great trainer and showman, a fine gentleman, our own C.H.S. member, and my good friend JORGEN M. CHRISTIANSEN.

In the Fall of 1920 I was back in my home Country, Copenhagen, Denmark, after a tumultuous and long





No. 4 — Norman Street Baggage Stock Barn and corral at Ringling-Barnum quarters at Bridgeport. Tom Lynch's home in center. January 1924. Photo by Robert D. Good

drawn out evacuation from Soviet Russia where I had spent 13 years. During that time I went thru World War One and two revolutions.

With me was my Russian born wife, Anna, and seven (7) beautiful Siberian Spitz Dogs.

In October of 1907, after serving in the Danish Army, I had left Copenhagen on my first voyage to Moscow, Russia. I had a contract as Bereiter (a horse trainers helper) for the circus Rudolph Truzzi who then was operating in the permanent circus building built by Mr. Salamonsky.

My earnings over the 13 years in Russia had vanished to zero because the BOLSHEVIKI had declared all the Russian Czar money to be illegal.

We now had to make a new start and on our arrival in Copenhagen my father loaned me 300 kroner. From here on for about a year and a half we traveled by train working our Dog Act.

In January of 1922 I was offered the position of Horse Trainer for the Circus St. Mroczkowski in Warsaw, Poland. It was a short term contract, January 16 thru April 15, 1922, as I was an unknown Trainer outside of Russia, I accepted as I was sure of myself and I had become very tired of traveling and Vaudeville. Anna kept on playing with the dog act known as MADAM A. STRAKAI'S SIBERIAN SPITZ DOGS.

During my first three months on my contract I had done very well and my contract was extended from April 1922 to March 1923.

During January of 1923, John T. Benson of Nashua, New Hampshire, U.S.A., came to Warsaw, Poland especially to see the 28 stallions, one gelding and one mare I had trained during the one year and three months for circus St. Mroczkowski. His mission was to buy them for the Ringling Bros. & Barnum and Bailey Combined Circus.

In this group of Horses I had a 16 Horse Liberty act, an eight black Horse & one pony Liberty act, and 3 six horse Liberty acts, one bay-one sorrel-one dappled grey, besides rear-

ing, jumping, and other Specialty horses.

Not hearing from Mr. Benson for quite some time I thought the deal was off but one day Mr. J. Goldberg, partner and Manager of the circus came beaming with excitement to tell me that the horses were sold to Ringling Bros. & Barnum & Bailey Combined circus and for me to go with them.

Completely astonished my reply to him was "Now Mr. Goldberg it is perfectly alright for you to sell your horses but you do not have the right to sell me with them". After a long consultation on what my salary was to be he said \$50.00 per week, the Circus St. Mroczkowski would give me a bonus of \$500.00 and a benefit farewell show before my leaving.

It was a memorable show with many gifts, flowers and all the seats filled with the elite of Warsaw.

The Danish Minister, his family and Staff were there and after my act came forward to the ringcurb and made a nice Farewell Speech, memories not to be forgotten.

We left Warsaw by train with our Siberian Spitz dogs, and the 30 Horses with five grooms shipping to Hamburg. At Hamburg on May 5th we were loaded on S/S Manchuria, reaching New York City about two weeks later.

The 30 head of horses were all loaded in the hull of the ship, all in individual stalls each 2' by 4', 7' high

No. 3 — Robert D. Good, left, and Jorgen M. Christiansen, right, with 'Ottoman' at Ringling-Barnum Quarters at Bridgeport, Conn. January 1924. Robert D. Good Collection.



No. 5 — Liberty Horses in backyard, Ringling-Barnum lot, Philadelphia, 1925. Photo by Robert D. Good

and 7' long to keep the stallions from kicking and fighting.

On this trip at the Bar I met two gentlemen from Brooklyn. They had seen the horses and our conversation was mostly circus. They said they never missed the circus when it played Brooklyn, it being the largest circus in the world. I asked them what all they saw and they were unable to say what they saw ending with "it was so big they could not remember what they saw". That was my first knowledge of "The Greatest Show on Earth".

It was late afternoon when we arrived in New York. We were to be met by Mr. John T. Benson and Frank Cook, the Legal Adjuster of the Ringling Bros. & Barnum and Bailey Staff. They were to clear the whole shipment including ourselves.

Time dragged on and no one showed up so we were taken to Ellis Island by boat. Our Visa's were temporary Performers Visas.

By night fall the two gentlemen showed up on Ellis Island with many excuses that did not soothe me. It already was too late to have us released from Ellis Island so we spent our first night in America on the Island. To make it more unpleasant my wife was taken to the Womens' ward and me to the Mens' Ward.

My temper rose in leaps and bounds and had it been possible to get on a returning boat to Europe we would have been on it however many times since then I have thought how fortunate it was that it could not be done.

The next morning the two gentlemen, Mr. Benson and Mr. Cook, were back to Ellis Island and with them we sailed back to New York to our S/S Manchuria ocean steamer containing our grooms, dogs and the horses.

Soon the unloading began and one by one all the 30 single stalls containing the horses were hoisted up and placed on the Pier.

It had been a long and hard trip for the horses as they had to stand on their feet the entire trip across the ocean. However none of them seemed overly tired when they came out of

their individual stalls and felt the ground under them. It is said that a horse is so constructed that he can stand and rest and also rest one leg at a time.

Each horse after it was unloaded was walked around for a few minutes and then loaded in railroad baggage cars to make the trip to the Winter Quarters of the Ringling Bros. & Barnum & Bailey Circus located in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

Most of the day was spent in the procedure of unloading and reloading and it was already dark when our train left for Bridgeport.

Mr. Frank Cook gave us a lot of instructions from which I understood very little and my wife exactly nothing. The English I had learned in school and also in private lessons was a great help. The trip to Bridgeport was via a slow moving train stopping at every Station and keeping us on edge hoping we would not miss the calling of the Station by the conductor.

When arriving in Bridgeport we found the Hotel Mr. Cook had referred us to across the street from the Station.

The following morning a gentleman from the American Hardware Company in Bridgeport came to the Hotel to see me. He seemed to be a manager for the Ringling Brothers' Interests in Bridgeport.

Soon we were unloading and taking the stock to Norman street.

This was the month of May 1923 and the Ringling Bros. & Barnum & Bailey Combined circus was on its season's tour. Left in the Winter Quarters were a few horses, a few wild animals, and two grooms.

With the horses coming here to America I was allowed five grooms, each to care for six horses. While in Warsaw, Poland I was asked by Charles Mroczkowski (now called Morosky) to bring him along to America. He had helped me in the training of the horses.

The only way I could do so was to eliminate one of my grooms which I did and Charlie came along. St. Mroczowski, the father of Charlie was the owner of the horses sold to Ringling Bros. & Barnum and Bailey Combined Circus and also the Director of the Warsaw Circus.

He gained possession of this circus after my former Boss there in 1906-



No. 6 — Ringling-Barnum 1925 trainers in backyard. Left to right, Jorgen M. Christiansen, Harry Herzog, Mabel Stark, Rudolph Mayer, and Vladimir Schraube. Photo by Robert D. Good

1907 had fled during the First World War with his family and his horses to Russia not to be taken prisoners by the Germans when they advanced toward Warsaw with their armies.

After our arrival from Europe to Bridgeport, Connecticut I found no one to be in charge of the Winter Quarters, however, I started to practice all of the horse acts every day as well as the two High School horses, Attamon and Nero. Attamon became very outstanding doing the COOCH. A few days after our arrival, Mr. John Ringling and his wife, Mabel came to Bridgeport to see his new horses. He was very pleased with them as I worked all of them for him.

He asked me to come to his apartment in New York City the following day to make up a contract for me to stay with his circus. The contract was made May 23, 1923 for the season.

Early in 1923 the Coliseum on Figuero Blvd. in Los Angeles had been completed and the Ringling Bros. got a contract for me and the horses to work an engagement in the Coliseum for several weeks time beginning July 1923.

Again we loaded the Stallions in Baggage cars in Bridgeport for the cross country trip to Los Angeles which took one week.

From Bridgeport we left on a Mail Train with a few coaches but we were switched to many other trains. That worried us a lot as I did not wish to get separated from the horses, so each time they would switch the horses to another train we would pick up our hand baggage and switch too.

No. 7 — Beautiful 24 Palomino Horse Liberty Act worked by Christiansen on Cole Bros. Circus 1937-38.



I could talk but very little English so stayed with the horses hoping to reach our destination together at Los Angeles, which we did.

On our arrival in Los Angeles we were met by the late Eugene Randow Sr. of the Aunt Jemima Comedy Act who had some additional men with him to help unload the Stallions.

None being horsemen I soon had a half dozen of the Stallions running loose causing extreme disturbances. On all the later loadings and unloadings of the stallions I used only my men with experience.

The Coliseum was a very large place seating 80,000 but we used only the front half of the infield for the show with my ring in front of the grandstand.

At this time I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Paul Eagles who had the order for the feed for my horses on our arrival. Ever since our arrival here in the United States I had been anxious to learn to drive a truck so each time the feed truck would deliver feed I would take a lesson from the driver.

My troubles with the horses were plenty. They had been trained to work indoors and took advantage of me here in the open spaces leaving the ring to romp in the infield.

To overcome this I had to practice. The days were very warm so we practiced early at sun up time. To keep the horses in the ring I used the men, having them stand around the ring on the outside.

On one occasion when practicing the dancing girls were also practicing on the stage. Again my horses left me standing alone in the ring. My temper was at its' worst blaring out much profanity of the Russian language.

My embarrassment was great when a man, Mr. Koslow, stepped in the ring and said "Please don't, my girls are all Russian".

One day while busy practicing the horses a man stepped up to me and remarked "Why don't you put up posts around the outside of the ring and place a rope around to hold the horses in the ring, that being the custom here.

Thinking it over I decided to try it and it worked.

Before the opening of the show one of my stallions, Morroco (a dapple grey) contracted a very bad



No. 8 — Jorgen M. Christiansen, Cole Bros. Circus, 1938. Author's Collection.

cold and I asked for a Veterinarian, however, one of the fellows hanging around the horses suggested Sloans Linament, which would cure Morroco right away. We got a small bottle and poured the contents down his throat. The horse went wild but he was cured. Much later I recall I used the linament on a sore leg of mine and knew right away why Morroco went wild. The Show in the Coliseum had its' opening with a big array of Movie Stars. The acts were working on the stage and I was working in my ring, my horses all behaving well and remaining inside the rope around the ring.

My main trouble was to get the 20 stallions over to the ring from the stables keeping them there till the act went on and then lead them back to their box stalls about five blocks away.

I realized now why the circus had not wished to have 30 stallions along with them on the 1923 tour.

With night shows only on this date we had much time for ourselves to take in the sights. My wife having seen me drive Mr. Eagles delivery truck in the Park surrounding the Coliseum suggested we should get a "Rented Car" and take a trip to see the sights. One morning after our breakfast in our Hotel, Charlie and I went down to Broadway, the street on which all the "Rent a Car" business places were located 40 years ago. We walked on the side streets which we planned to use coming back to the Hotel to pick up my wife so as to miss the heavy traffic.

I left a deposit required and was given a Model T Ford car with no questions asked. We picked up my wife at the Hotel and started on our way. To start the car was a problem and after a few rough jerks our Model T Ford was operating and we were on our way to beautiful Santa Monica.

At this time a big boom for real estate was on in the Los Angeles area. We like many other amateurs,



No. 10 — Famous Creamoline Stallions in training 1927-28. This act was sold to Cole Bros. Circus in 1935. Author's Collection.

had been taken in by hard pressure salesmen advising to buy corner lots. This place at that time was called Girard located about 30 miles from Los Angeles, on Ventura Blvd. Today the place is called Woodland.

Our trip to see our investment of \$3200.00 for two lots was on a constant upgrade and our Ford was getting boiling hot and making lots of noise. The Highway was very narrow with hardly room for a car to pass, but that was 40 years ago. It was frightening to look down in the ravines and see the cars that had rolled down, complete wrecks.

We stopped at a fruit stand to ask someone what was wrong with our Model T as it was so hot and we feared it would explode. We were told it probably needed water and possibly the battery should be checked. Charlie and I knew nothing about a car but after this trip we really were much wiser. When we reached the summit we could see the road was downhill. We could see Ventura Blvd. and saw our town Girard with its' cut out streets, its sidewalks and newly planted trees.

After reaching Girard we needed a rest so stopped to investigate the lots we had bought and to eat our picnic lunch my wife had brought along.

Starting back to Los Angeles we had good going till we entered Los Angeles on a street under repairs. The street was jammed with cars ahead and behind us. For some reason a police officer was telling everyone to back up and backing up was a very weak point for me.

To make a good impression to the

No. 9 — Christiansen's Great Dane Dog Act. Author's Collection.



officer when he motioned to me to back up I began whistling. Fortunately I succeeded and we were on our way.

At this time the traffic was very heavy as it was going home time for the workers. I lost my turn on Broadway to the "Rent a Car" place and it was a wild chase to find it again. Finally I was on Broadway but on the wrong side of the street. Nothing could stop me now from turning and out went my arm and across the street I went.

It was getting late and we had a show to do and with shaking legs, after getting out of the car, we had to hurry back to the Coliseum.

A few days later I was in the feed store of Paul Eagles and told him of our trip in the Model T. He asked me if I had a drivers license? My answer was no and did not know one was required.

My trip with the Model T was a much discussed topic among the circus officials for a very long time.

The engagement in the Los Angeles Coliseum came to a close and we shipped back to the Bridgeport Winter Quarters. Our practice sessions were a daily affair. I had noticed that with the 16 horses in their act when working in pairs did not fill up the ring as they did when in Warsaw, Poland. My wife came in with a suggestion that I make a 24 horse act.

I had never heard of a 24 horse liberty act. It was either 1922 or 1923 that Charles Sparks had on his circus a 16 horse act that he had brought over with the trainer, Ernest Kloske. My wife thought that being we were now with the greatest and largest circus on earth I should put on the largest liberty horse act in the world.

I had seen Ernest Kloske in my home town Helsinger, Denmark, long before I had thought about joining a circus. He was working an eight horse liberty act of sorrels that was called a "Cannon Act." Four horses were hitched to each cannon for the



No. 11 — South American Criollo Horses, 10 abreast, worked by Christiansen in 1938. This act was sold to Arthur Bros. Circus in 1944. Author's Collection.

opening, each set running in opposite directions after which they were unhooked and a fast and furious 8 horse liberty act began. Mr. Kloske was a tall man with a mighty voice. Every command he made was heard by the audience and I have always remembered the horse "Morgenstern." That horse came out of the line, seven remaining in the line. Morgenstern then did between the other horses and the trainer the most wonderful hind-leg waltz around the ring, a sight I can never forget.

I followed out my wife's suggestion and began to work on the new project. First I had to pick out 8 stallions from the 12 I had left and add to the 16 I already was working as an act. I worked one section of 4 from the 16 horse act to which I added two of the new ones to teach them the routine. There were four groups to teach, each group of a different color.

I kept on practicing until the Ringling Bros. & Barnum & Bailey circus came in from its summer tour to the winter quarters in Bridgeport, Connecticut. All activities stopped for a few days until all the equipment, the wild animals and the stock had been placed.

The big addition of horses made the ringstock barn with the training ring very crowded. I was told that all of my horses and my training ring would be moved to another location as soon as it could be made ready. My new location was in a brewery, located on Main Street in Bridgeport, closed since prohibition. It was a very nice place well ventilated and clean. For my helpers a small cook house and a bunkhouse was furnished.

The progress with the 24 horse act was very good. On one day the shows' veterinary came to me and said to-

morrow we will castrate all of my stallions. I had no objections as I realized they could not be handled on the circus when in operation.

The castrating operation was a very hard thing to watch as no anaesthetic was used. Each horse was thrown, turned on their backs and hog tied. The groans of the horses was a heart breaking ordeal to hear however the operation caused no delay and by the doctor's orders, we, the very next day, began exercising them to avoid any swelling that might occur.

By the time it was January, 1924, many rumors were being heard about me and my horses, such as how I could change 24 horses going one way in the ring to the opposite way and so on. Some performers who we had worked with in Europe said I was no horse trainer as they had worked with us and it was a dog act. They even said someone else had trained the horses that I brought over.

The beginning of February the horses were coming along very well.

Mr. Fred Worrell, the manager of the Ringling Bros. & Barnum & Bailey Combined shows, stopped by to take a look at the progress of the 24 horses. I had the worst confusion I had ever had in the ring.

Mr. Worrell naturally had heard the rumors from the other three horse trainers, and said to me, "Mr. Christiansen, we do not have much time left before we open in Madison

No. 12 — Christiansen's Story Book Animal Review as it looked when begun in 1951. Author's Collection.



Square Garden in New York City, and do you think it would be better to go back to your 16 horse act?"

I fully realized his feelings after what he had just seen. I asked Mr. Worrell would he please come back in two weeks and if then I did not have a perfect working act I would go back to the 16 horse act.

In two weeks he was back and saw a perfect working 24 horse liberty act.

Soon, Mr. Ringling came and was greatly impressed with the new act.

Following him came our publicity man, Mr. Dexter Fellows, with New York reporters and photographers.

Then came the opening of the "Greatest Show on Earth" in the old Madison Square Garden, New York City, the last time in that building 1924.

There were rehearsals and then the great dress rehearsal with, as guests, reporters, photographers and other special personalities.

That night when it came to the horse acts, two twelve horse acts, one in each end ring, and my 24 center ring, my horses refused to do one of the difficult routines. When I saw I could not get it corrected with Merle Evans Band so noisy I asked our Equestrian Director, Mr. Fred Bradna, to have the music stopped. There was much confusion among the top brass that I should delay the rehearsal, however, Mr. John Ringling was soon on my side and I got my horses back doing the whole routine.

When the New York City engagement was over we moved on to Brooklyn where we started our tented season, and was assigned berths on the special circus sleepers to use for the season.

When my wife and I came to the sleepers the first night the porter showed us a very nice stateroom. I did not know that there were such nice rooms on the train and considered it a bonus to me for my presentation of the 24 horse liberty act.

The seasons 1924-1925-1926 went by. At the end of season 1926 Mr. John Ringling asked me if I would make a Tableau Act such as the one Mr. John O'Brian had trained for him.

Already I had been thinking of something new for the season of 1927. It was just what he was now asking for. I told him what my ideas were and would need 4 zebras, 5 camels and additional ponies to make 27 ponies and would need 39 horses for the Tableau.

Mr. Ringling said I could have anything I needed. On our return that fall to the winter quarters at Bridgeport I was moved to a large empty factory building located in a suburb near Bridgeport. Here I began my work to train the large Tableau Act. I had it ready for the opening in the spring of 1927 in the new Madison Square Garden in New York City.

I worked both the new Tableau Act and also the 24 horses in the



No. 13 — The Story Book Animal Review as it looked just prior to the sale to Cristiani Bros. Circus in 1957. Author's Collection.

Madison Square Garden engagement and also in Brooklyn under canvas.

During the season I refused to work one of the acts because Mr. Ringling would not accept his manager, Mr. Fred Worrell's, agreement with me pertaining to my salary. From here on I worked the 24 horse liberty act only.

At the close of the season 1927 I left the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Combined Circus. I went to the small town of Lexington in the State of Oregon, where I knew of some very fine Palomino horses.

Mr. B. F. Swaggart, the owner and breeder of these horses, was a very difficult man to do business with, however, after a couple of trips to his farm we finally made a deal. I bought five geldings and three stallions. Two additional stallions, Sunburst and Sunshine, I had to lease for the 1928 season.

This act I called "The Famous Creamoline Stallions," a name coined by the breeder for these cream colored horses.

My contract for this liberty act and high school act with Sunburst was made with the Barnes-Carruthers Booking Agency of Chicago, Illinois, for the 1928 season with my opening date at Springfield, Illinois.

With this act I played fairs, parks and circuses until the fall of 1934, when at the Royal Winter Fair and Horse Show in Toronto, Canada, Mr. Zack Terrell arrived wishing to buy my acts for the Cole Brothers Circus now being organized in Rochester, Indiana.

From the Toronto show I brought the horses to Rochester and started

to work as trainer for the Cole Brothers Circus.

After the 1935 season I left the Cole Bros. Circus and worked my 11 Great Dane Dogs for the Hamid Office in 1936.

Early in 1937 I was again offered the job as trainer for the Cole Brothers Circus to make them a 24 Palomina Liberty Horse act for their opening at the Hippodrome Theatre in New York City. It was a circus date on the large stage of the Hippodrome with a showing of one act at a time.

The Cole Bros. Circus played the 1937 and about half of the 1938 season, closing in the middle of the summer in Illinois. The show returned to Rochester, Indiana, and we were paid off with two dollars each.

I again went back to Lexington, Oregon. Mr. Swaggart had passed away, however, I was able to buy 10 green buckskin horses. I halter broke them on the ranch before leaving. Again it was what would be the name of this act. In looking through some western horse literature I saw the names "South American Criollo Horses of Argentine." My horses were the same color so decided to call my act "South American Criollo Liberty Horse" act. In the summer of 1939 I had the act ready. Nobody knows when they see a finished act just what has occurred during the making of the act. Behind this Criollo Horse Liberty act a lot of things had happened.

When I went to Oregon to purchase these horses I had the permission from Jess Murden to bring them to the Cole Brothers Barn in Rochester, Indiana, to stable and train the horses. He was in charge of the barn for the South Bend Investment Company.

After a month's training in that barn I was told by Mr. Murden that I had to find another location as the

investment company refused to let me remain in the barn.

It was a great problem to find another place to house 10 horses and 11 Great Dane dogs and the training ring. After extensive searching I found an empty building in Fulton, Indiana. In it I had to build stalls for the horses as well as a ring, after I had covered the entire floor with a heavy layer of dirt. I finished the training in this barn.

My opening with the Criollo Horses as well as my Wild Animal Burlesque with 11 Great Dane Dogs was at the New York World's Fair in 1939 at the Old English Village.

On our arrival at the Fair we found the stalls for the horses had not been built yet and when they were built they were made so narrow a horse could not lie down in them.

When the Old English Village started to play, it was much like a carnival, doing show after show.

On this date I was presenting my Criollo Liberty Horse Act, a Wild Animal Burlesque with 11 Great Dane Dogs and a third act of 5 Great Dane Dogs and a midget pony.

After a few days of work on this date I was taken to a hospital, remaining three days, having had a nervous breakdown, which ended the engagement.

We shipped all of the animals by railroad to Rochester, Indiana.

Again we had to search for a suitable place to put our animals and this time it was at the Fairgrounds in Akron, Indiana, ten miles east of Rochester.

At this late time I was very fortunate to secure a fair contract for my wild animal burlesque act. My Criollo horses I placed on a farm with pasture for them.

With 1939 behind me, my bookings for 1940 and 1941 were the average number of dates that I booked with different booking offices. I had now



THIS ACT TABLEAU: 75 Animals, Trained & Produced 1926-27 on the Ringling Bros. & Barnum & Bailey Circus, Winter Quarter, Bridgeport, Conn. By JORGEN M. CHRISTIANSEN

No. 14 — Artist's Conception of the 75 Exotic Animal Tableau Act presented by Christiansen at the Madison Square Garden engagement of Ringling-Barnum in 1927. (Ed. note: An exhaustive search failed to locate a photograph of this act. Bandwagon will be pleased to run a photograph of this famous act as a supplement to this article if one turns up in the future. If any member has such a photo or knows anyone who does please notify us). Author's Collection (Drawing by Ruth Snow)

given up working the Wild Animal Burlesque Act with 11 Great Dane dogs, and worked the Liberty horses only.

In the spring of 1942 I drove to Los Angeles, California, to join the Russell Brothers Circus for the season.

In 1943 I again played with the Russell Brothers Circus opening in Los Angeles. When on our route and playing San Francisco, the Russell Brothers Circus was sold to Mr. Arthur Concello. The circus continued playing under the new owner, however, it closed early when we reached Denver, Colorado.

Early in 1944 the Arthur Brothers Circus bought my horses and all of my equipment giving me a contract to present the Liberty act for them.

In 1945 the Arthur Brothers Circus was a railroad show. After an unsuccessful season we closed in Texas and returned to Los Angeles.

For the 1946 season the Criollo Horses were booked to tour with The Polack Brothers Circus and with me presenting them.

In 1947 I was with the Clyde Beatty Circus as equestrian director and trainer.

On the 1948 season I was with the Polack Brothers eastern unit presenting their black horse liberty act.

During the 1949 season I did not go with any traveling circus, remaining in Fulton, Indiana, training riding horses for private people.

In 1950 I started to train my "Story Book Revue Act." With this act I opened in 1951 at Greenville, South Carolina.

This act consisted of one Palamino horse, one Brahma steer, one pony, one Sicilian donkey, one Nubian goat, two dogs, a Scotch collie and a German shepherd.

For the 1952 season I continued playing with this group of mixed animals. However, in 1953 I had to make a change in the act as the Brahma and the German shepherd dog were very vicious and dangerous, replacing them with two Guanaco's (ancesters to the llama), and a Norwegian elkhound dog. It was during this season that my wife, Anna, passed away.

During my 1954 season I played the Minneapolis Zuhrah Shrine Temple Circus booked by Mrs. Edna Curtis. During the engagement she told me one of the Shriners had told her "that mixed animal act you have is surely a Story Book Revue." Right then I decided that would be the new title for my act.

The following season of 1955 I

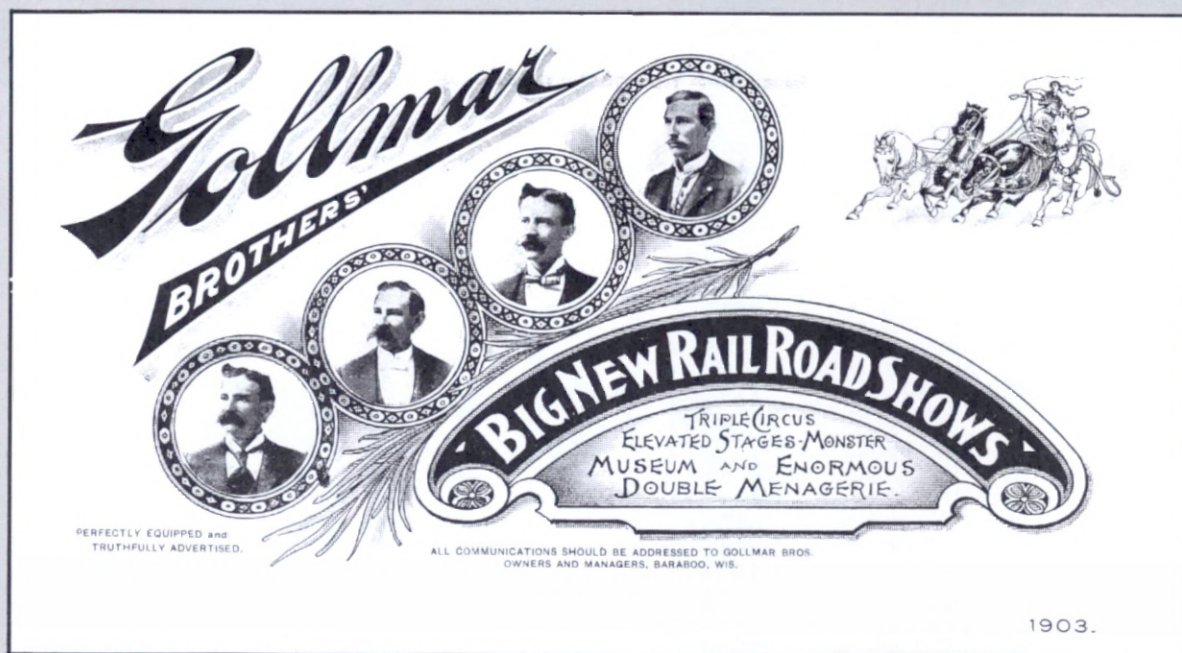
was with the Polack Brothers Circus. The 1956 season took me to Honolulu, with some very nice dates in the United States to follow including a TV engagement.

This brings me up to 1957. In January of 1957 Mrs. Edna Curtis and I were married. My first engagement for this season took me to the Seal Test TV show with the Syracuse Shrine circus to follow. From here I joined the Cristiani Brothers circus to whom I sold my "Story Book Revue Act," remaining with the circus for the season, presenting the act for them.

My retirement followed. My wife, Edna, retired after her 1960 Minneapolis Shrine circus date after 34 consecutive years booking the acts for the Minneapolis Shrine Circus. I had spent 52 years in show business and Edna forty-nine but as time marches on our hearts are still with the circus with memories never to be forgotten.

(Ed. Note: Mr. Christiansen has also graciously furnished us with another article on some of the technical aspects and problems of training animals for the circus ring. This will appear in a subsequent issue).

Chalmer Condon's Letterheads



One of the most attractive letterheads ever used by Gollmar Bros. Circus, is the above design, dated 1903. It is all in royal blue, except for the photos of the Gollmars, which are in brown.

BARNUM SHOW BALLOON WEDDING

By JOHN C. KUNZOG

To fly like birds has been man's dream from the time he gazed skyward in awe at the abilities of the fowls of the air. Many attempts were made with devices that would flap like wings, with all such attempts ending in failure. Man's first journey skyward was accomplished by the Montgolfier brothers of France in 1783. Their successful voyage above the clouds brought many imitators and daredevils of various nations sought to unlock the secrets of the skies.

American history tells us of Lowe's Balloon Corps of the Union Army during the War of Rebellion, but is silent on the fact that daring Southerners requisitioned the voluminous silk pettiskirts and dresses of Southern belles to make balloons to spy upon the Union Army.

Yet even before the war the U.S. Signal Corps had initiated a series of ascents in interest of meteorology.

The circus was not slow to adopt this spectacular attraction to draw people to the town. Sands, Nathans & Company's American & English Circus was perhaps the first to launch balloon ascensions. Through the courtesy of Buffalo (N.Y.) Historical Society is shown a balloon being readied for flight when that show played there on July 31, 1858.

The lifting power of this balloon no doubt was hot air, as many of the early balloons were. A crude furnace was easily constructed for inflating the giant bag. A trench approximately 12 feet long, 4 feet wide and 3 feet deep was excavated. A crude chimney of sheet iron was formed and fitted to one end of the trench and iron plates placed over the open top and then covered with earth. A wood fire was built, and there being no turns from firebox to chimney, a perfect draft resulted, assuring a brisk fire. As the smoke died down when the blaze reached perfect combustion, the neck of the balloon was held over the chimney—a hundred willing hands volunteering to participate. As the heat entered the bag, it slowly began to inflate and within a short time the balloon was filled with heated air, tugging at restraining hands. At the proper moment, the balloonist gave the electrifying cry, "Let her go!" As the throng released their hold, the balloon gracefully rose skyward as thousands gazed in awe, rapture and envy at the aeronaut in the balloon basket who signalled with his hand "All's well."

Many of the early aeronauts sailing in heated air-filled balloons, descended in a parachute after reaching a certain height. When the balloonist and parachute cut loose from the

balloon, it would slowly tip over because of a weight fastened to its top. The heated air would be expelled as the balloon drifted lazily over the landscape wafted by the wind.

Circus crews generally knew the direction the balloon would take by studying wind directions. They also knew the approximate distance and were there to retrieve the balloon, while the aeronaut could shift for himself. A nominal reward also was offered for return of the balloon. It was a psychological solution to a possible vexing situation. The balloon could land in a field and damage a stand of corn or other crop. But a \$5 cash reward, plus passes for the family, plus the distinction of a balloon landing in his field, assuaged the anger of many a granger.

Following the Civil War the balloon became an established feature with all large shows. Many used coal gas to inflate the silken bag, while improvements in gear helped the pilot to guide his cloud-riding chariot as well as assuring safer landings.

The balloon and circus joined to write a thrilling chapter in the book of matrimony in 1874 when P. T. Barnum's Great Roman Hippodrome was the scene of the first aerial marriage, two Hippodrome troupers being joined in wedlock one mile in the air at Cincinnati, Ohio.

That season Washington H. Donaldson, an intrepid aeronaut, had joined the Barnum show and thrilled the populace of the various communities with his ascensions. He became a victim of Cupid's arrow, the object of his affection being Margaret Taylor, an equestrienne with the show. Donaldson's idea of an appropriate wedding was having the nuptial knot tied in a balloon high above the mundane sphere. He wanted an aerial wedding, but the young lady demurred. She wanted to keep one foot, at least, on solid ground.

D. S. Thomas was press agent and he recognized publicity value when he saw it. Finding that no amount of persuasion could induce the obdurate Maggie to change her mind he obtained permission from Donaldson and set about to canvass the field for candidates for the lofty matrimonial venture. He found potential possibilities in the persons of Charles M. Colton, of the circus business office, and Mary E. Walsh, equestrienne. They had been toying with the idea of a public wedding but couldn't see any dramatic possibilities because of their divergent callings.

The dapper Thomas had the solu-

First advertisement announcing Aerial Wedding. Cincinnati Enquirer, October 16, 1874. Author's Collection.

BARNUM'S HIPPODROME.

P. T. BARNUM'S



Great Roman Hippodrome!

LINCOLN PARK.

Afternoon and Evening.

Every Act as Exhibited in the
Mammoth New York Hippodrome.

ALL THE BRILLIANT

Hurdle and Flat Races,

By Daring Young Lady Riders.

English Jockey Races,

By Native and Foreign Jockeys.

Roman Chariot Races,

By Amazonian Drivers.

Roman Standing Races,

By Prominent Equestrians.

Elephant and Camel Races.

TRAINED ANIMALS.

Laneashire Races and Donnybrook Fair.

First appearance in this city of the beautiful

M'LE VICTORIA, Aerial Queen,

IN HER PERILOUS

Mid-Air Ride Upon the Velocipede!

Balloon Ascension Extraordinary.

A BRILLIANT

Wedding Above the Clouds,

To-Morrow (Saturday) Afternoon.

Upon this occasion a marriage will be solemnized, for the first time upon record, high in the heavens, the service being conducted by a well-known clergyman after the balloon has reached its highest altitude. The Bridal Party will consist of 6, viz.: Bride and groom, bridesmaid, groomsmen, minister, and Professor Donaldson. The bride and groom are prominent attractions of the Hippodrome, the bridal trousseau being the complimentary gift of Mr. BARNUM.

Doors open at 1:30 and 7. Procession moves promptly at 2:30 and 8 o'clock.

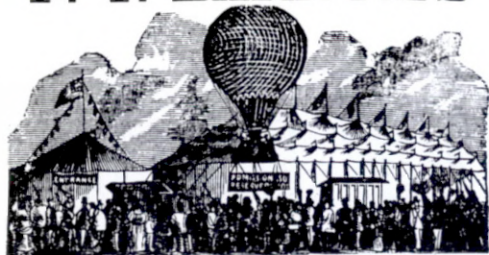
ADMISSION—Family Circle, 50 cts.; Orchestra Chairs (Reserved), \$1.

Cincinnati Season Closes Saturday Night,
October 24. oct5-11

BARNUM'S ROMAN HIPPODROME.

Avoid the crowd and delay at the ticket-office by securing seats four days in advance at CHURCH'S MUSIC STORE, 66 Fourth street. A small advance is charged.
[oct4-6] We F Sa Su Mo We

P. T. BARNUM'S



GREAT ROMAN HIPPODROME!

CLOSES SATURDAY NIGHT, OCTOBER 24.
LINCOLN PARK, AFTERNOON AND EVENING.

Grand Culmination of all the Great Races This Week—No Act Omitted—All the Brilliant Features of the Great New York Hippodrome reproduced at Each Exhibition.

BALLOON WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENT

Owing to the accident on Saturday—the first occurring in a long series of semi-weekly ascensions—the Balloon Wedding above the clouds is necessarily postponed until THIS (Monday) AFTERNOON. The Rev. H. B. Jeffries, of Pittsburgh, officiating clergyman, has kindly consented to remain, and all details will be carried out as per previous arrangement. The Ascension and Wedding will positively take place immediately upon the close of the regular afternoon entertainment. A parachute will be dropped from the Balloon at the conclusion of the marriage ceremony.

PRESS ASCENSION

TUESDAY AFTERNOON, October 20th, when several members of the daily press will make a prolonged aerial voyage with Prof. Donaldson. Doors open at 1:30 and 7 P. M. Entertainment commences at 2:30 and 8 o'clock. Free admission granted to all who purchase Barnum's Great Book, written up to March, 1874, 900 pages, reduced from \$5 to \$1.50.

Advertisement with message of postponed wedding in the skies. Cincinnati Enquirer, October 19, 1874. Author's Collection.

tion. Was Mary fearful of a balloon flight? Certainly not! "Fine! The biggest thing in the history of show business!" smiled Thomas. "You'll be married in mid-air. It will be the biggest wedding party ever assembled. People will come from miles around to witness the sky-bride."

Thomas was no slouch at words or in coining beautiful phrases. He continued to delineate the glories of an air-borne marriage—all costs assumed by the great P.T.—of the honor of being the first bride wedded in the clouds; of a wedding ring placed on her finger betwixt heaven and earth, certainly an omen of good fortune; of the good wishes and silent prayers of the earth-bound multitude for a happy voyage through the clouds and a prosperous voyage through life.

Under the persuasive pleading and cajolery of Thomas, Mary found herself in a mist of indecision, but if clouds of doubt gathered in her mind they were soon dissipated by the breezy chatter of the press agent. She became starry-eyed on visualizing the beautiful word picture of an aerial wedding painted by Thomas and was treading the silver-lined clouds of romantic dreams, returning from her flight of fancy only when she heard the press agent state that there were many details to take care of, so the two lovebirds will please excuse him.

The aerial wedding was advertised to take place following the afternoon performance at Cincinnati, Ohio, on Saturday, October 17, 1874. Misfortune entered the wedding scene, when at the last moment a rip in the gas-filled balloon brought disappointment to the wedding party, show management and thousands of persons assembled on the grounds. The Cincinnati Enquirer of October 18, 1874, tells the story:

BARNUM

The Balloon Busted and the Wedding is Postponed
New Features of the Great Show
The Roman Hippodrome tent was

crowded yesterday afternoon to witness an arenic performance that has never been excelled in this country. Outside of the huge tents were gathered nearly fifty thousand people. The announcement that Miss Walsh of the Hippodrome company would be married "up in a balloon" to Mr. Charles M. Colton, an attache of the business department of the establishment, was the attraction for the outsiders. The basket of the aerial ship, "P.T. Barnum" was beautifully decorated for the marriage occasion with flowers and streamers. The concentrating ring was wrapped in crimson. The supporting ropes of the carriage were white; the lookout was covered with snowy white muslin; the bottom of the basket was richly carpeted. Everything indicated that the affair was to come off in style. The Rev. Mr. Jeffries, of Pittsburgh, was on hand to perform the mid-air ceremony. Prof. Donaldson had on his wedding garments, and was a sight to behold, with his new coat and "morning" pants and boutonniere. Thomas, the prince of press agents, was also on board as Master of Ceremony, bright in broadcloth and redolent of red roses. But alas for the uncertainty of human hopes!

THE BALLOON BUSTED

just after she had been inflated by Mr. Harry Gilbert, Mr. Donaldson's business manager. She split from bottom to top owing to a defect in the netting somewhere near the valve. An effort was made to get the "Barnum," a smaller balloon, ready, but it was found to be impossible to do so. It only remained for Mr. Whittaker to announce in the Hippodrome the management's

FIRST FAILURE IN BALLOONING

He explained the cause; announced that the marriage would come off on Monday according to the original program and that "to prevent disappointment as far as possible" the bridal procession would move around the arena at the close of the entertainment, and so it did. The great band marched first, playing the ever-grand "Wedding March." After it followed two carriages, the first containing the bride and groom, and the second the "best man," Mr. W. C. Coup, general manager of the show, and the bridesmaid, Miss Annie Yates. The horse of the latter vehicle balked and the brave little bridesmaid and her escort walked around the arena. It was a

TRYING ORDEAL FOR THE BRIDE

But she went through it like a heroine she had proved herself to be in one previous voyage to the heavens and in consenting to the mid-air marriage. We called on her last night at the Crawford House and found her with her affianced. She is a beautiful auburn-haired blonde, full of life and common sense. She had at first refused to believe the report which greeted her when she alighted from her carriage that the balloon had collapsed.

Then she had resolved to go off at

once to get married, but had finally been coaxed by her friends to wait and carry out the original plan on Monday. She showed with great pride the beautiful wedding cake that had been presented by Colonel Geffroy of the Gibson House, and the other preparations for the little reception that was to have taken place after the voyage. The trousseau, which had been prepared by Mr. Barnum's instructions, under the supervision of the worthy wife of Mr. Frank Whittaker, we did not see. We take it for granted it is worthy of the brave and beautiful girl who is to wear it.

The newspaper account tells how the bride was coaxed by friends to agree to a postponement. The mental anguish that assailed Miss Walsh when the first news of the accident reached her, and her feelings when she gazed at the torn balloon can well be imagined. With fear gripping her heart but with a smile on her face, she rode around the arena, acknowledging the plaudits of the spectators. But when she reached her hotel room she broke into hysterical tears and her friends and lover were unable to console her.

Circus folks are steeped in superstition and this calamity was quickly accepted as a portent of evil. Between weeping spells Miss Walsh pleaded to have the nuptial knot tied immediately in a church rectory.

Circus management was deep in trouble. Already rumor-mongers were circulating their versions of the affair: It was just another Barnum hoax to draw people to the show; the bursting of the balloon had been planned, and similar tales, which being repeated were elaborated upon with each telling. It was the topic at dinner tables, drawing rooms and barrooms that evening. Many hot-heads were for wreaking vengeance, and a vigilant guard was kept at the show grounds.

Quick action was needed to save the reputation of the show, and it was Press Agent Thomas who "pulled a rabbit out of the hat" and saved the balloon wedding. He learned of a soothsayer, "a seventh daughter of a seventh son, whose eyes could view the past and pierce the future." Not risking anything to such talent, Thomas outlined his problem. He wanted Miss Walsh induced to agree to a Monday aerial wedding. He had in his possession scores of facets of the equestrienne's life that the fortune teller could use and could add thereto golden promises of her own.

Thomas crossed her palm with the proverbial silver and soon the gifted one called upon the sorrowing girl and her friends at the hotel. She had, she stated, received a vision and would be remiss in her duty to a grief-stricken girl, as well as incurring the wrath of her invisible guides that endow her with her mystic power, if she failed to take the message to Miss Walsh.

And going into her act, she stared at the blank wall of the room and

related many episodes of Mary's life, emphasizing the one when she was thrown from her horse and miraculously escaped death underneath the hooves of other horses. Detail after detail of the past were revealed to the startled girl, many which she had almost forgotten. The old crone then told how the guardian angel had caused the rip in the balloon because adverse wind currents in higher altitudes would have made the balloon journey unwise.

"This is the first day, tomorrow the second day, Monday the third day—which is the lucky day. Ride to the heavens with your bridegroom and be married as no girl before and be far happier than any girl before," were the parting words of the subsidized soothsayer, as she rose to leave.

Mary, her heart now singing with joy, reached into her reticule and brought forth money to offer the siren singer, but it was refused with profuse thanks, thus giving greater authenticity to her tale.

Now reconciled that everything happened for the best and believing in toto everything told her by the fortune teller, Miss Walsh broke into laughter and startled her friends by saying:

"Go tell them we'll be married in the balloon Monday!"

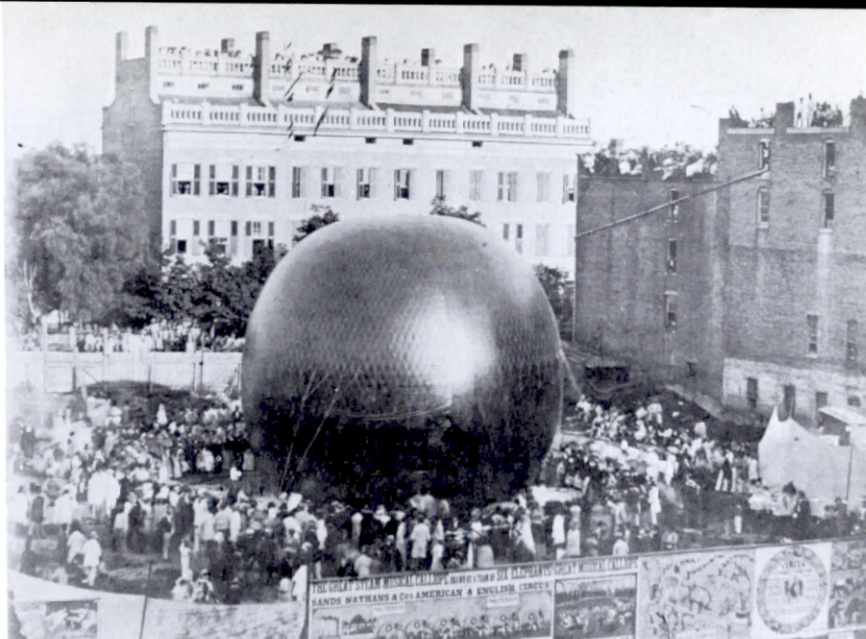
Colton lost no time in hunting up Thomas. The press agent raced to Miss Walsh's room for confirmation of the news, while Colton carried the news to show officials.

Too late to have an advertisement in the Sunday paper, Thomas got a printer "out of bed" as it were, to get out some handbills. As they slowly came off the press, Thomas grabbed them in lots of 25 or more, and assisted by others, rushed these bills to livery stables and railroad stations. Persons living within a radius of 50 miles and returning home, were requested to take these snipes and display them at prominent points in their community. The majority of persons approached gladly accepted the handbills carrying, as it were, an invitation to the first aerial wedding.

And thus a glib-tongued press agent and an unknown soothsayer helped to make possible a "first" in marriage history, and also made editors conscious of the human qualities of circus people.

At this period newspapers were restricted in size by mechanical limitations. There was no way to increase the number of pages from day to day. When there was a heavy influx of news, some stories were "set" in smaller type, and on many occasions stories of lesser importance were held over for another day, and even advertisements omitted to make room for news.

The linotype machine was still in the future, type being set by hand, a single character at a time, letters forming words, words forming lines, the metallic click, click of type being assembled into the composing stick, about 250 words an hour, was the



rhythmic song of a newspaper composing room at that period. The double column headings also were unknown—they had to await the Spanish-American War to see the light of day. And so under a single column head the editor of the Cincinnati Enquirer, who viewed the balloon wedding as the greatest story of the year, gave in length of text what it lacked in sensational headlines. Only students of early newspaper history can envision the herculean task confronting the editor of the Cincinnati Enquirer to get such a lengthy story in type on such short notice, and there is little doubt that every available printer was put to work to help ready the longest story of the year, as follows:

AN AIRY WEDDING
The First Marriage Ever Celebrated
in a Balloon
Donaldson Makes the Most Graceful
Ascension of His Life
A Beautiful Bridal Party and Fifty
Thousand Guests

It was a glorious afternoon when the Hippodrome performance closed at half past four yesterday. It was one of those days, on the very verge of Indian Summer when we, in Southern Ohio, rejoice that we live there. There was a slight haze hanging over the city that softened, but did not obscure the sunlight. Both moon and sun were visible; the latter sinking round and lurid, to the west; the former rising, pale crescent-shaped from the eastern hills. A lovelier wedding hour never dawned on a happy bride, and bonnier bride never welcomed it than Miss Mary Elizabeth Walsh, equestrienne of Barnum's Roman Hippodrome, who was to wed in midair her affianced, Mr. Charles M. Colton, also of the great show. The attendants were Miss Anna Rosetta Yates, the beautiful and daring equestrienne, and Mr. W. C. Coup, Mr. Barnum's popular business manager. The officiating minister was Rev. Mr. Howard B. Jeffries, of the Church of Christ, a branch of

Balloon being prepared for ascension at Buffalo (N.Y.), July 21, 1858, as a feature outdoor attraction of Sands, Nathans & Co.'s American & English Circus.

Photo courtesy of Buffalo Historical Society

the Swedenborgians, Pittsburgh. The audience at the great show poured out to see the ascension. Lincoln Park and all the adjoining space was filled with a multitude that numbered fully

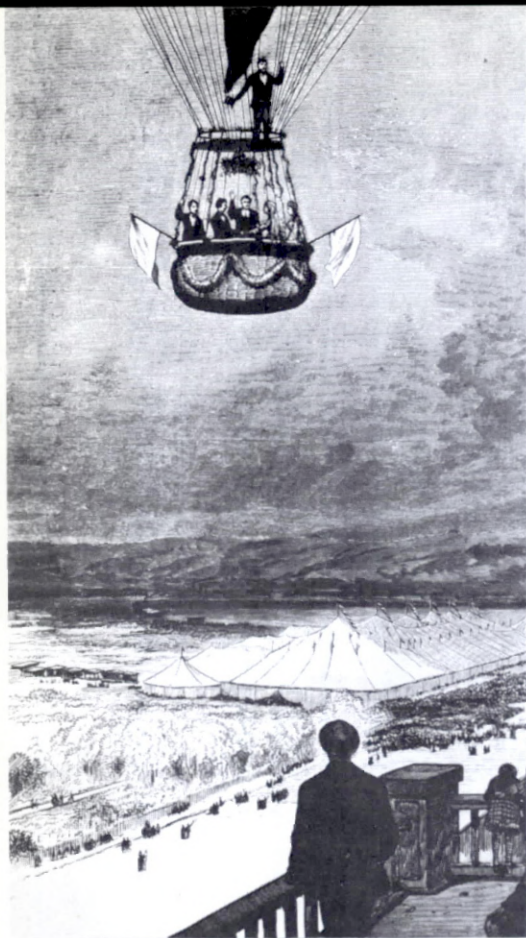
FIFTY THOUSAND PEOPLE
and which made up, probably, the largest wedding party on record.

Mr. Donaldson was ready promptly, dressed to kill, and with bridal favors. The "P. T. Barnum" was full almost to bursting with the best of gas. Her basket was trimmed with flags and flowers. The ensigns of America and Ireland hung gracefully from her. All that is unsightly or forbidding about a balloon was hidden by the decorating care of loving hands. Rare bouquets hung from the ropes, and baskets of exotics swung from the "look-out." Mr. D. S. Thomas, the best of press agents, had general charge, and not even the minutest detail was neglected. Mr. P. T. Barnum and his bride were of the selected company admitted within the ropes. A pathway was kept clear for the bridal procession, at the head of which marched the magnificent Hippodrome Band playing

Mendelssohn's Wedding March.

The suite entered the basket by a step-ladder, and were soon all ready to go. Then Mr. Donaldson found that the balloon would "lift" seven people, and Mr. Thomas was taken in, boutonniere and all. The bridal group was as picturesque in itself as any we have ever witnessed, even when all the fashionable world has filled famous churches to feast their eyes upon a long, stylish marriage train.

The girls were fair, and exquisitely arrayed. The blonde bride wore a delicate pearl-colored silk, with bias folds and heavy trimmings of fringe and puffing in the back. Her hat was



Full page sketch of Balloon Wedding appearing in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, November 7, 1874. Author's Collection.

the graceful "Brigand," of the same shade as the dress and with rakish white feather and "pearl" bird, the exquisite toilette being completed by white gloves in dainty hands. The bridesmaid's toilette was equally elegant, on a basis of black silk, her hat and other appointments being the same as the bride's. Mrs. Frank Whittaker, under Mr. Barnum's carte blanche, had superintended the toilette, and they were perfect.

The richly decorated aerial ship rose as gently and as gracefully and as beautiful as a child's soap bubble and ascended in a direct perpendicular line, while tens of thousands of throats shouted up their plaudits. The balloon drifted slightly to the northward and westward, and in ten minutes a parachute thrown out told that the nuptial ceremony had been completed. It was sent fluttering downward at the precise moment that the "Amen" of the shorter Swedenborgian ceremony was uttered, as was subsequently ascertained. The airship took a famous trip. She was over a mile high before the ceremony was completed, and directly over the 24th Ward. Then, striking a different current, it floated gracefully across the northward portion of the city, the sun being reflected brightly from its new coat of varnish, and typifying to those below the happiness of those

who were "drifting" above. Well may the bride remember and quote: "No more, no more the worldly shore Upbraids me with its loud uproar! With dreamful eyes my spirit lies Under the walls of Paradise!"

The voyagers went to where they could look down at Eden Park; then with another change of current, floated and settled gently down on an open lot near the Widows' home, where a multitude soon surrounded them. Carriages had followed them, and while returning learned the following:

THE MID-AIR CEREMONY

had been solemnly performed by Rev. Mr. Jeffries, whose tones never trembled as he said:

"Marriage is not an earthly, but heavenly institution, belonging to the higher realms of life, and as such it is revered by the enlightened; the greater the enlightenment of any country or community, the greater the respect it accords marriage; as an institution above those of the world, merely, it is, then, most fitting that its solemnization should be celebrated far above the earth.

"May you, whose life-destinies have been joined together at this altitude, be always lifted above the adversities of life. Hence you look down upon the multitude below, who appear as pygmies from your elevation, and you see that the sun is fast going down upon them; shadows lengthen and darkness will quickly enwrap them.

"Soon we shall all descend to earth, as we must shortly all go down to the grave. As upon leaving this vessel you two will pass forward in company while you live, so, when you have both crossed to 'that bourne from whence no traveler returns' may your united souls in company explore the glorious paradise of God's redeemed."

The party had been as jovial as wedding parties always are, with the added enthusiasm of those who, for the first time, see the glory of God's world from a balloon. They ate grapes, and pledged in sparkling wine the bride's health and happiness. They laughed at the cock fight and dog fight which they distinctly saw going on below. They grew solemn in their admiration as they saw below them both sun and moon and clouds, and drank in the awful grandeur of the scene.

When they left the balloon, which Mr. Donaldson succeeded in towing back to the city, gas and all, ready for today's sail (a feat seldom accomplished) it was to drive to the Cathedral where Father Quinn, in obedience to the bride's religious scruples, performed a second ceremony. He married them "with the ring" and prefaced the solemnity with a few impressive remarks, complimenting the bride on having in a strange city sought to find a priest to marry her in the clouds and a husband on having yielded to his wife's share of right. "Both things," said

Father Quinn, "argued future prosperity." The bridal party were then briefly received by His Grace, the Most Rev. Archbishop Purcell, who impressed them, as he does all men, with the cordiality and kindness, which goes hand in hand with his distinguished learning and piety.

Later in the evening, at the Crawford House, there was

A LITTLE RECEPTION

at which there was a bounteous table and more than bounteous good will. It was a reunion of those who are endeared to each other by professional as well as personal ties, and there mingled with them in brotherhood Messrs. Hurd, Coup, Thomas and other prominent managers of the show. There was there, too, newspaper men and others who have a weak side for the better phases and kindlier hours of human nature. Many were the contributions, in every way, to the enjoyment of the memorable night, among which we may quote the following extempore writing of Mr. Sellers, treasurer of the Hippodrome, to the bride:

TO MARY

Up where the thunder sleeps,
Up where the angels rest,
Above the clouds
Our bonnie bride retreats;
Our fairest, sweetest, best,
A mist enshrouds.
Matches in heaven are made
And hand to hand they clasp
As seemeth best;
Far from us, undismayed,
Her happy chains are cast,
And she is blest.
Down, down once more to earth
We welcome her again,
Our bonnie bride;
To hope and joy and mirth,
Exempt from care and pain,
Whate'er betide.

THE CERTIFICATE

given by Rev. Mr. Jeffries to the bride reads as follows:

Charles M. Colton, Miss Mary E. Walsh married in the balloon "P. T. Barnum" one mile high over Cincinnati, Ohio, October 19, 1874. Rev. H. B. Jeffries, Officiating Clergyman.

And such is a brief, plain history of the first mid-air marriage on record.

Cincinnati Enquirer, Oct. 20, 1874

The Balloon Marriage attracted the largest wedding party of all times. Royal couples from time immemorial have been married amidst pomp and splendor, but it remained for two circus troupers being united in wedlock in mid-air to draw the multitude.

The story of the aerial wedding appeared in many papers throughout the nation. Frank Leslie's Weekly, an illustrated tabloid of national circulation, featured the event with a full page sketch, but editors of the dignified Harper's Weekly, to whom the word circus was anathema, never mentioned the event, so its readers had to look elsewhere for the story of The Biggest Wedding Party In History.

Truth or Fiction



Ballantine

Legend or Fact

By PIERRE COUDERC

"... but these, our circus artists, remain to awaken within us again, and yet again, ecstatic thrills and to reassure us that we are not animated clods, but that truly we are of such stuff as dreams are made of..."

Irving K. Pond

PART II. THE FLYING TRAPEZE (LES VOLANTS)

Throughout history is the record of kings; how they've come and gone, some soon forgotten; others long remembered. In circus history, the reign of King **Alfredo Codona** will long be remembered! But even while he reigned and after he had relinquished the throne to **Concello**, there were other leapers who aspired to the royal crown.

One legend has it that between 1933 and 1940 at least two scores of leapers executed the triple; and another legend covering the same period relates that only two flyers could accomplish the feat. But again both are more fiction than fact. To be sure, there were a number of leapers who turned the triple during that period, but not two scores of them — though more than just a couple. Among those aspirants can be listed: **Buster Melzoras** and **Rod Cushman**, both of The Flying Melzoras; **Harry Lamar**, of The Flying Lamars; **Harold Voise** of The Flying Harolds; also **Bert Doss**, **Harold "Thoughty" Genders**, and **Billy Ward**.

There is no question that, at one time or other, either in practice or during a public performance, those fine performers caught the triple — but not with any sufficient degree of frequency, accuracy or regularity to be considered in a class with **Ernie Clarke**, **Alfredo Codona**, or **Art Concello**.

Rod Cushman was the first to be given the opportunity to take Alfredo's place with the Codonas. Under Alfredo's coaching he did turn some triples to Lalo's hands. But his average of catches was so low that Alfredo decided to replace him with **Clayton Behee**.

Between 1933 and 1936 **Harry Lamar**, with **Benny Gibson** on the catch-trap, also caught triples — but

never with the assurance of a **Concello** or the grace of a **Codona**. The same would apply to **Buster Melzoras** and the others previously mentioned.

However, by the middle 1930's, two serious contenders for the crown were looming brightly over the circus horizon. In Europe was **Genesio Amadori**, and in the States, **Wayne Larey**.

Genesio Amadori was the featured leaper with the **Amadori Troupe**, then consisting of his father, **Goffredo**, the catcher, and his two sisters, **Gilda** and **Ginevra**. There is ample documentation to substantiate the fact that **Genesio** was catching the triple regularly between 1935 and 1938. It may also be mentioned that he was the first performer to duplicate **Jules Alex's** spectacular pass of a "lay-out back" and catch **WITH ONLY ONE HAND!** Better yet, **Amadori** even turned a double to a one hand catch!

It can also be related that **Alfredo Codona** personally held the young Italian leaper in such high esteem that **Alfredo**, a year before his death, had written him a letter in which he expressed the opinion that **Genesio** was the only contemporary flyer with the potentials of becoming the next King of the Flying Trapeze!

Genesio Amadori and the Les Amadori Flying Act in Europe. Burt Wilson Collection.



The above sketch by Bill Ballantine is from **TRUE** magazine and is copyright by Fawcett Publications, Inc. It is of **Fay Alexander** and catcher **Bob Yerkes**.

But **Codona's** appraisal and prediction never came to pass, for **Genesio Amadori's** claim was short-lived. On November 21, 1938, while performing in **Liege, Belgium**, **Genesio** missed a catch of a double twister and plunged to the net, breaking his spinal column as he landed on his neck.

Only 25 years of age, he died the following day at the hospital, his mental faculties unimpaired — expressing his regret that fate had prevented him from fulfilling **Codona's** prediction. Thus, like **Ernie Lane**, another brilliant artist was listed in the **Circus Martyrology!**

Simultaneously in the States, **Wayne Larey**, a colleague of **Art Concello** (who, upon the death of **Ed Ward, Sr.** in 1929, had acquired the latter's "Flying School" in **Bloomington**) was the featured leaper of "The Flying Comets." By 1936 **Wayne Larey**, with **Bob Porter** on the catch-trap, was also turning triples with regularity — and catching them with a remarkable average of 85% or better. **Larey's** accomplishment was all the more remarkable when one considers that he stood 5 foot 7 inches tall and weighed around 160 pounds — a rather large size and weight as compared to the average leaper, who rarely exceeds 5 foot 4 inches and seldom scales more than 140 pounds.

Without any doubt here was another great artist who, too, had the potentials to become a king! Among professionals, there are some who contend that when it came to "pirouettes," **Larey** executed these with such mastery and grace that he even excelled the great **Alfredo!** Concurrently with **Genesio Amadori**, **Wayne Larey** continued to gain the plaudits of circus audiences with his triples during 1937 and 1938. But then another brilliant career was brought to an abrupt halt when **Larey** first pulled a shoulder while executing the triple, then dislocated it while doing a double cut-away with a half-twist.

What a pity! Like **Codona**, another set of shoulders that didn't hold out — and it spelled "finis" for another



The Flying Wards as they appeared in 1929 on the Sells-Floto show. The three men are left to right, Frank Shepard, Wayne Larey and Toughy Genders. Burt Wilson Collection.

illustrious leaper. By a strange coincidence, the careers of two of the most promising artists on the fly-bar, Amadori and Larey, were brought to an end on the same year!

Somehow or other, for more than a decade, no flying star appeared over the circus horizon to lay claim to the crown — until 1952 when, by another strange coincidence, in that same year two more leapers started turning triples; again, one in Europe; the other, in the States.

In February of 1952, the Italian leaper, **Cesare Togni**, descendant of an old circus dynasty, presented the triple publicly when the parental Circo Togni appeared in Milano. Cesare was already 28 years of age at the time. Considering that his father, Ugo, had made him climb the rigging when only 16, it had taken Cesare 12 years of assiduous practice on the fly-bar before realizing his ambition!

At the time there were professionals who thought that Cesare Togni might become another Genesio Amadori. For a couple of years Cesare, with his cousin, **Ligo Millette**, as catcher and his brother, Oscar, as the second leaper, did continue to turn triples on spasmodic occasions. True his average of catches was rising — but rather slowly. Then in the spring of 1955, when the Circus Ugo Togni was in Bari, Italy, both Oscar and Cesare's careers as leapers were brought to an abrupt end through a serious accident which was almost fatal to the latter.

Oscar and Cesare were executing a double pass, with the latter leaping over Oscar returning from the catcher to the fly-bar when there was a brush of the two bodies in mid-air. Oscar lunged to the net — followed an instant later by Cesare. As Oscar landed, a guy-wire on the net snapped under the impact; when an instant later Cesare landed, the collapsed net was already a limp stretch of cordage.

As a result of this accident, Cesare was so severely injured that his career as a fly-trap artist could never

be resumed. Within a 3 year span, the Italian "shooting star" had risen and fallen out of orbit!

In the meanwhile in the States, a young leaper in one of Concello's flying acts was also rising in the circus firmament — to remain in orbit. His name? **Fay Alexander**. Compared to Cesare Togni's 12 years on the fly-bar before catching a triple, Fay Alexander caught his first one after only two days' practice! To those who'd watched this accomplishment it was incredible!

But then, to Fay's surprise and consternation, instead of Concello expressing his congratulations, came a blunt order from the latter to Fay, to discontinue any further attempt at the triple — either in practice or in public. The Concello order was puzzling. Among the professionals who were aware of Alexander's potentials, there were some who questioned Concello's ulterior motives. Could it be that the latter resented this young upstart being able to execute the triple with such ease and with so little effort?

Such a wild conjecture should never have been made by anyone in the first place. Had it had any basis, then Concello would also have ordered Wayne Larey to cease and desist more than a decade before. Common sense should have dictated that Concello, by then fully aware of the dangers of a torn shoulder, which can happen on each and every occasion that a triple is caught, was more concerned in saving a promising artist from ruining his career prematurely by trying too hard to reach the height too soon.

Perhaps Concello vividly remembered how Codona's and Larey's careers had been brought to a sudden ending as the results of torn shoulders. Perhaps he also was endowed with a foreboding sixth sense. The fact remains that, order or no order from Concello, Alexander would have had to give up turning the triple anyhow — at least for quite a spell. For during 1952 in which he caught his first triple, Fay dislocated his left shoulder when he missed a catch and went to the net.

Obviously Concello was deeply concerned over the future of his ward, for in the winter of that year he insisted in sending Fay to the Mayo Clinic. There, the medics gave Alexander a choice of two alternatives: 1, surgery without any assurance of a cure; 2, a two-year lay-off from the fly-bar, also without any assurance of a cure.

It was a difficult decision to make. Two years is a long time. But Alexander chose that. It proved to be a wise decision, for by 1955 he was able to resume practice on the fly-bar and, eventually, even resume catching a number of triples to Ed Ward, Jr. — when both of them were engaged to "double" respectively for Tony Curtis and Burt Lancaster in the famous film "TRAPEZE."

Once confident that his shoulder had completely healed and would

"hold out," Fay subsequently formed his own act in 1957, "The Flying Alexanders," with **Bob Yerkes** catching. Once more he caught triples with regularity, assurance and ease. Both Alexander and Yerkes looked forward to the debut of the new act with the Ringling Show at Madison Garden with a great deal of anticipation — for they had a surprise "cooked-up" for both the spectators and the professionals! During the winter, they had practiced a forward triple cut-away to the "stick" — and catching it with an average of 5 out of 6! A stupendous feat, which should have been sensational!

But when the act reported for the opening at the Garden, once more Concello commanded Alexander to cease and desist. "No triples, Fay," the executive flatly ordered — "either backward or forward."

It was a stunning blow for Alexander who had anticipated astonishing one and all with the almost insuperable feat! On the surface the Concello order could be construed as a dictatorial suppression of an artist's prerogative. But again common sense dictates that Concello's order was based solely on his concern for the physical welfare of one more flyer who was willing to risk his professional career on the execution of a difficult feat — which is rarely appreciated by the unintiated audience.

Thus during the 1957 and 1958 Ringling seasons, Alexander had to reluctantly give up presenting the triple — by executive order only. But when the act went to the Polack Bros. Circus in 1959, Alexander and Yerkes wasted no time in resuming presentation of the triple! As a matter of record, once they even caught a triple **WITH ONE HAND!** To be sure it was strictly an accident, neverthe-

The Flying Alexanders. Bob and Dorothy Yerkes. Rose and Fay Alexander. Fay Alexander Photo.



less, and also by accident, the feat is recorded on film!

Today, and even though he's plagued with arthritis in the left shoulder, Alexander still turns the triple—except during cold weather spells, which causes aggravation of the arthritic condition. Starting in May of 1964, The Flying Alexanders, now with **Paul McCausland** at the catch-trap, will display their artistry for the next 26 weeks at the N.Y. Fair Circus. Whether or not Fay Alexander thrills the daily audiences with triples will depend on the condition of the weather and his shoulder. But for those who may attend the show and fail to see Alexander turning a triple, you can be sure that the choice to do or not to do will not be his—for with such a dedicated artist, giving his best has always been his credo.

But whether Fay Alexander ever catches another triple or not, his revival of the feat in the early 1950's certainly inspired a number of other performers to duplicate it. Again legend has it that it triggered an avalanche of leapers who executed the triple during the 1950-60 decade. But again that is more fiction than fact. To be sure there have been a few—but not so many that they can't be counted on the fingers of both hands. In sifting the facts from the fiction, the list dwindles considerably.

In the same year of 1952, when Alexander caught his first triple, various reports from the British Isles announced that another troupe named Los 3 Condoras was also executing the triple while performing at the Mills Circus, then appearing in Glasgow that June. It is true that the Condoras, after practicing for three years, were turning "some" triples—now and then. But their average of catches had not reached the point where they dared to present it publicly at every performance.

Obviously it never did improve sufficiently—for the triple never was integrated into the act as part of their regular routine. As late as 1958 and 1959 when the Condoras appeared in various circuses on the European continent, their very best routine consisted of only the double-and-a-half to the catcher and a double-and-a-half pirouette return to the fly-bar.

In the wake of Alexander and in chronological order can be listed **Tony Steele**, of "The Flying Steeles," who caught his first triple in 1955, with Mike Malko on the catch-bar—and the following year started presenting it in public with **Bob Yerkes** catching, with a 70% average of catches. Today, with **Billy Woods** as his catcher, Tony Steele averages 9 out of 10 catches—and holds the distinction of being the only leaper who can execute the triple-and-a-half!

This feat, which was first accomplished in September of 1962 in Durango, Mexico, with **Lee Stath** as catcher, has become a rather con-

troversial "conversational piece." Among professionals there are some who contend that the triple-and-a-half is no more difficult to catch than the triple—especially a triple caught wrist-to-wrist, as compared to the arm-to-arm catch followed by a quick slide to a wrist grasp.

Actually this is true, for in the wrist-to-wrist catch the leaper is turning away from his catcher, while in the leg-to-arm catch of a triple-and-a-half the legs of the leaper are turning into the catcher's arms. Obviously, in the first instance, the leaper's timing has to be more exact during his "break-away" of his last revolution. On the other hand, that extra half-revolution needed for the triple-and-a-half isn't quite as simple as it seems—for it often entails a "misorientation" of the flyer who, revolving with tremendous momentum, can at times experience a complete loss of feeling regarding the position of his body—making it difficult to sense whether he's up or down.

Coupled with the above is also the additional danger that can ensue from a failure to catch—which places the leaper in a critical position from which to hit the net safely. As a matter of fact, Tony experienced such a landing once—which left him completely paralyzed from the waist down for two weeks, and a mighty painful back for a whole year.

Because of the danger involved and the difficulty of execution, Tony Steele and Billy Woods have deemed it prudent to refrain from presenting the triple-and-a-half to the public, though they continue to practice it daily, whenever they both feel fit and only for the gratification of self-accomplishment. Perhaps they are wiser than their years. After all, if there are occasions when an uninitiated audience is not capable of distinguishing between a double-and-a-half and a triple, what chance is there that it could tell the difference between a triple-and-a-half and a triple? Thus Tony Steele is perfectly content to limit his public performance to the triple, which he catches daily with a remarkable average of 90%. Indeed a spectacular average!

Now there are also some few experts who are inclined to be critical of Tony's triple, on the grounds that his is an "arm-to-arm" catch rather than the true "wrist-to-wrist." But then again Tony may be wiser than his years. Perhaps he, too, like Concello, has come to the conclusion that no plaudits from any audience is worth a torn shoulder and an abrupt end to his career. And who could criticize him for that! Actually, how many people are there in any one audience who can detect the difference between a true "wrist-to-wrist" catch and the "arm-to-arm" catch which an instant later ends up in a wrist-to-wrist lock?

There is no question that such a superb artist as Tony Steele and such a reliable catcher as Billy Woods can



The Flying Steeles. Rosa Woods, Tony Steele (top), Billy Woods and Lily Steele. Tony Steele Photo.

make the "wrist-to-wrist" catch at every turn. Considering the lack of knowledge of the average spectator, if Tony wisely chooses to spare his valuable shoulders in order to minimize the ever present danger of a crippling mishap, who can criticize such good common sense?

Contemporary chroniclers have extolled the artistry of The Flying Steeles—and rightfully so. They have also made much-to-do over Tony's accomplishment of turning the triple-and-a-half, declaring him to be the one and only performer to execute this feat. That, too, is more fiction than fact. It may come as a surprise to some of those chroniclers—and even to Tony—but the fact is that Ernie Lang and Art Concello (when the latter was in his prime) also turned the triple-and-a-half on quite a number of occasions, during practice, of course. Moreover, right now there are also Los Ibarras Hermanos (which will be commented upon later) who do the triple-and-a-half.

Also for the record, it should be mentioned that Ernie Clarke even turned and caught **THE QUADRUPLE!** Back in 1915, when the Clarkonians were performing with the Orrin Bros. Circus in Mexico City, Ernie and Charlie Clarke executed the quadruple numerous times. But that, too, was only in practice and never integrated into the act, for they never gained sufficient mastery to present it in public.

And if one doesn't mind starting an international controversy on the subject, it can also be mentioned that, during the early 1910's, **Edmund Rainat** and **Raoul Monbar** on many occasions executed the triple, **NOT TO A CATCHER, BUT "BAR-TO-BAR!"**—which is a feat considered impossible by many present day professionals.

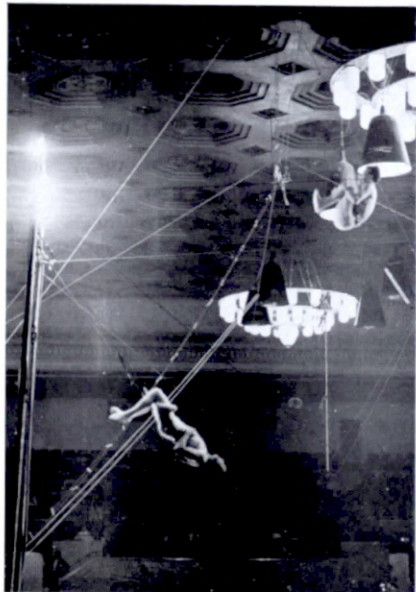
For the circophile who may be uninitiated in the intricacies of the art, it should be mentioned that there is quite a difference between turning a triple from the fly-bar to a catcher, as compared to one being caught to another trapeze. Obviously, with a



The Flying Artons left to right: Dorothy Yerkes, Bob Yerkes, Bonnie Armor, in front: Reggie Armor. Photo Courtesy of Bob Yerkes.



Tony Steel is shown here performing the triple, with Billy Woods catcher. Tony Steele Photo.



catcher, the latter can adjust to a certain degree whenever the leaper may be a fraction off his timing — and still manage to make the catch. Bar-to-bar, the leaper is strictly on his own. There is no leeway. Either his timing and execution are perfect — or he misses the catch of the coming trapeze.

Almost as important is the jar of the catch. With a catcher, there is the elasticity of two sets of muscles to absorb the shock. Bar-to-bar, the flyer is again strictly on his own to absorb the shock. And a mighty grip it requires to hang onto that bar! Either a faulty timing or faulty execution will result in (a) at best, a trip to the net, (b) a set of wrenched shoulder and/or arm muscles, (c) a mouthful of broken teeth — for when one is struck in the face by a swinging trapeze bar of 10 to 12 pounds, it goes without saying that he'll be lucky to escape with only a few loose teeth!

Considering the extreme difficulties involved, Rainat's and Monbar's achievements are indeed incredible! However, and though those are documented facts, inasmuch as neither of those two fabulous performers ever integrated that bar-to-bar triple into his act and/or ever performed it in public, this stupendous deed has to remain out of the record-book. And a pity that is!

Be that as it may, and coming back to chronological order, next should be listed **Roger Rodriguez**, of the Flying Marilees, who during 1959 and 1960 and with Lee Stath as catcher, turned the triple regularly while touring Europe — and with a better than 70% average of catches. Then, once again, a promising career was brought to a halt when Rodriguez had to leave the act in order to serve a three-year hitch in the Armed Services — during which there was little or no time to practice a demanding art.

Almost simultaneously was **Georges Lalo Palacio** — also called "Frenchy" by those who knew him well — and who with his brother, Raoul, and his other brother, Jose, and sister, Irma, formed "The Flying Palacios." Lalo's first triple in practice came in 1958, when the Mexican leaper was already 27 years old. With Raoul on the catch-bar, the brothers started presenting the triple publicly in 1960 — but only spasmodically and with a rather low average of catches.

But with or without the triple in their repertoire, the Palacios presented a splendid act, for the length of Lalo's trajectories and the grace and elegance with which he executed his various passes were reminiscent of Alfredo Condona's. Standing 5 foot 7½ inches and weighing 140 pounds, Lalo "Frenchy" Palacio was taught the "finesses" of fly-trap artistry by none other than the same **Georges Clair**, who once had been an associate of "King Alfredo."

In 1963, with **George Golding**

catching, Lalo's average of catches of the triple increased considerably, though it never went much higher than a modest 40%. However, whenever he caught one, it was always beautifully executed and never failed to thrill the audience.

During that year, by a strange twist of fate, the professional lives of Lalo Palacio and Roger Rodriguez became intertwined — for when the latter came out of the Armed Services to resume his career, simultaneously Lalo's was brought to an abrupt end when he committed suicide on the 18th of September of that year, on the eve of the Ringling Show's opening in Lille, France.

Thus Roger Rodriguez's career was resumed when he took Lalo Palacio's place in the Palacios' act. Obviously, after a three year lay-off without practice, Rodriguez's timing and conditioning precluded any attempt at the triple. Thus far there hasn't been any reports that Rodriguez has returned to his former "form." But it is hoped that this splendid performer will again execute the triple with the same degree of proficiency as when he was the featured leaper with The Flying Marilees.

This brings us down to the present crop of contemporary leapers executing the triple with such acts as the Flying Artons, Goanas, Ibarra, Luna Brothers, and Seminole.

Of those just named, **Reggie Armor** of "The Flying Artons" deserves special mention, if only because of the ease, grace and elegance with which he executes the triple. Also remarkable is the fact that Armor became a fly-bar performer at a much later age than usual — and without the advantage of having learned acrobatics during his early youth.

Now 34 years of age, Reggie Armor, 5 foot 7 and 148 pounds, didn't start swinging from a fly-bar until 1959 — and didn't make his first catch of a triple until 1962. Considering that he didn't become a professional performer until he was 25 years old, and also considering his height and weight, it is amazing that he was able to master the execution of the triple on such short order. At first his average of catches was no better than 20%. But in the short space of a couple of years, and with such a reliable catcher as Bob Yerkes, now his consistent average has reached a high of 90%. A most remarkable achievement!

Among professionals there are some who, like Fay Alexander, are of the opinion that Reggie Armor bids fair of becoming another Alfredo Codona, for he possesses all the potentials! There is an interesting sidelight regarding Codona-Alexander-Armor. Before Alfredo became "The King," his inspiration had been **Ernie Clarke**. In turn, Alfredo became Fay Alexander's inspiration. Today, Reggie Armor will candidly admit that Alexander was his inspiration.

(IN THE NEXT ISSUE: Part III, The Flying Trapezes)

BILLY SMART'S CIRCUS

"Britain's Largest"
By FRANKLIN O. FELT

Prior to the demise of the Ringling-Barnum tented circus in 1956, there was no doubt as to which circus could claim to be "the world's largest." The term, "The Big one," was synonymous with Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey's Greatest Show on Earth. Undoubtedly, the arena version of the Ringling Show still can contend for the title, "The Greatest Show On Earth," if judgment is based on the scope and grandeur of the performance. However, there is doubt today as to which circus is truly "The Largest Circus On Earth."

What show presently merits claim to being the largest circus on tour anywhere? Agreement on this question depends upon the factors accepted as the standard of measurement in gauging the size of a circus. Prior to 1956 the Ringling show was the undoubted master regardless of the standards used: number of employees, animals, trucks, rail cars, size of tents or any combination of these factors. With this mastery no longer unchallenged, comparison of the size of the world's leading circuses becomes a fascinating exercise. The reviews of current circuses printed in the **Bandwagon** generally include all of the above criteria and thus provide an excellent source of data to compare the size of the larger circuses. Since these circus reviews are usually confined to shows on tour in the United States, American readers are apt to overlook the fact that several circuses now touring outside the North American continent equal or surpass in size any of their U.S. counterparts.

In 1962 Europe could nominate at least two circuses as leading contenders for the title of "the world's largest circus:" Billy Smart's Circus in England and the Circus Krone touring West Germany, Austria, and the Netherlands. The remainder of this article will consist of a review of Billy Smart's Circus, a show with the more modest sub-title of "Britain's Largest Circus," but which may well be entitled to proclaim itself the "World's Largest Circus."

Before reviewing the details of the 1963 edition of this circus, a brief history of what is probably the world's newest big show is in order. Unlike most of Europe's top circus owners Billy Smart did not come from an old line circus family. Over forty-five years ago Billy Smart started in show business as a concession operator with a carnival (fun fairs as they are called in England). Despite the usual ups and down of

show business he made a great success of the carnival business and by the end of World War II was a well-known "fun fair" operator. In 1946 Billy Smart decided to fulfill his long cherished dream of operating a circus. This 1946 edition of the Billy Smart Circus was an adjunct to this carnival and was not too successful. Undaunted he risked most of his hard earned capital on another try in 1947. This time he made full use of his teenaged sons in the venture and with the entertainment starved British Isles affording boom times for circuses, the show clicked and the carnival was abandoned for full concentration on the new circus.

Although the Smart family does not have a long history in the circus business, the Billy Smart Circus is a typical European operation as it is a family run show. Most of Billy Smart's ten children and thirty grandchildren are with the show and those who are old enough take active roles in its operation and performance. Overall management is carried out by Mr. Smart Sr. and his three sons: Ronald, David, and Billy Jr. This family team proved itself so fabulously successful that in only ten years after its founding (1946-1956) Billy Smart's Circus had grown to a point at which it could challenge the field for the title of the "World's Largest Circus," a position it retains today.

This circus is truly the British version of John Ringling North's under canvas show. Billy Sr. and his sons have all traveled in the United States and have studied the "Big One."

Their show reflects this influence all down the line. From the mammoth dark blue big top, trimmed in red, to the elaborate costuming, brilliant production numbers, and tent full of gorgeous girls, spectacular floats, and jewel bedecked elephants one can feel the influence of JRN.

This reviewer has had the opportunity of visiting the show at three different stands in the suburban area of London in the spring and summer of 1963. Despite a season of exceptionally damp and cool weather, even for England, all equipment and props were in excellent condition and the costumes and uniforms neat and clean.

The new royal blue big top is one of the largest in Europe and makes an impressive appearance on the lot. It is a European style, one ring affair, 185 ft. in diameter, supported by four king poles (centers) which are 75 ft. high, 52 queen poles (long quarters) at 38 ft., and 24 quarter poles (short quarters) at 30 ft. Side poles are 14½ ft. high. The king poles are placed at the four corners of a square which holds the one large ring. The top pulls up to 51 to 53 ft. on the king poles with its center apex at 61 ft., suspended by lines from the four king poles.

Even the side walls of the top are blue which makes the interior as dark as the inside of a building, thus allowing for maximum effectiveness of Smart's very elaborate lighting effects, even during a matinee on a sunny afternoon. The spacious interior comfortably seats well over 5,000 persons and still allows room



Unloading of No. 50, one of four specially constructed trucks designed to haul seats.

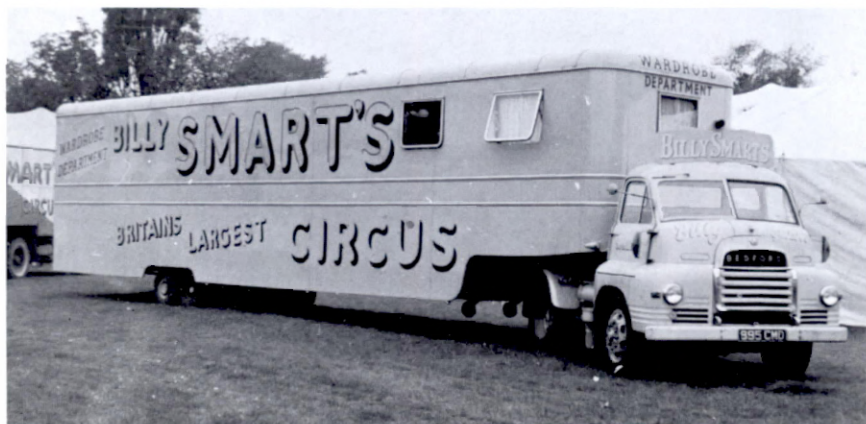


Lighting Equipment Van. Note 12 wheel arrangement on this large straight truck. All photos by Author.

for a hippodrome track just around the perimeter of the four king poles, two rows of box seats (canvas chairs), a second track for patrons, 16 high benches, and a walk-way about four feet wide behind the top row of benches. Smart's is the only show in Great Britain which utilizes a hippodrome track, but it is a necessity for staging the elaborate production numbers.

The menagerie is not as large as that carried by Kelly-Miller in the States, Krone on the Continent, or its English rival Chipperfield's. By present U.S. standards, however, it is impressive. It is set up on the European style with lead stock quartered in long, narrow stable tents and the six large cages of wild animals lined up in the open. One of the tents houses fifteen elephants, five camels, four llamas, one sacred cow, and two zebras. The other tent stables the thirty horses and three ponies. Three cage wagons hold the sixteen polar bears used in the performance, one cage carries chimps, one rhesus monkeys, and one some miscellaneous small animals (porcupines, wart hogs, foxes, and baboons). No lions, tigers

Wardrobe Department semi, one of the finest vehicles of its type touring in Europe.



or other large cat animals are carried.

Also in the European tradition is the absence of a side show, pit show, or other midway attractions. When one approaches the lot all that is seen is the large and colorful canvas entrance in blue and red with white lettering. This is fronted by the ticket wagons and a row of colorful flags running the length of the main entrance. Behind the entrance is a large marquee top in which several candy and novelty stands are located.

The only other canvas on the lot is a very large performers' marquee adjacent to the back door. Five colorful spec floats are stored there along with other props used in the show. Backing off of this tent are the various prop and wardrobe wagons which can serve as dressing areas.

An impressive array of trucks, wagons and system railway cars is required to transport this very heavy show. Almost all the lead stock, elephants, and the spec floats are transported by rail, while the remainder of the equipment goes overland. Interesting to many American fans are the giant, ex-U.S. Army Mack diesel trucks each of which pulls up to three twenty foot wagons over the highways. All the show's trucks, except the semi-trailers, pull one or more wagons which vary in length from about fifteen to thirty feet. Showmen in England are granted

special permits to haul extra long loads on the roads.

The color scheme on the rolling stock consists of a light grey and dark green combination divided by a diagonal line across each truck and wagon body. All lettering is bright gold with black trim. The transportation list is as follows:

Old U.S. Army Mack diesel puller trucks (these carry no show number).

No.	Contents
1	Box seats
2	2 generators
3	Single generator
4	Breakdown (tow) truck
5	Tires and misc. equipment
6	2 generators
7	Crane truck (travels with advance king pole unit)

Old British Army diesel puller trucks (these carry no show number).

No.	Contents
8	Stake puller
9	2 generators
10	Tires and misc. equipment

Trucks (S—denotes semi-trailer and St-12 a straight truck and the number of wheels it carries)

No.	Show	No.	Type	Contents
11	15	S		Props
12	—	S		Wardrobe
13	—	S		Women's rest room
14	80	S		Lead stock
15	—	St-10		Big top canvas
16	—	St-10		Menagerie and back-yard marquee
17	45	St-12		Seats
18	47	St-12		Seats
19	48	St-12		Seats
20	50	St-12		Seats
21	—	St-12		Menagerie props and stables
22	—	St-6		Covered wagons and props
23	—	St-10		Two generators and light dept. equipment
24	—	St-6		Dining dept. supplies
25	—	St-6		Concessions
26	—	St-6		Concession supplies
27	—	St-12		Light dept. props
28	—	St-6		Props
29	—	St-6		Sleeper
30	—	St-6		Sleeper
31	—	St-6		Sleeper
32	—	Bus		Sleeper
33	—	Bus		Sleeper
34	—	St-6		Fire dept. and water
35	—	St-10		Stake and chain and sleeper for king pole erection gang
36	—	Panel		Road sign dept.
37-41	—			Five elaborate semis which serve as mobile homes for the Smart family
42	—	S		Advance ticket sales and press office
43	—	S		Advance ticket sales and advance office
44-49	—			Six small panel jeeps serve as bill posting units

Wagons

Show		Contents
No.	No.	
50	68	Sleeper
51	70	Sleeper
52	73	Sleeper
53	75	Sleeper
54	78	Sleeper
55	79	Sleeper
56	58	Props and ring curbs
57	61	Props
58	—	Band stand and performers entrance
59	63	Harness
60	64	Stables and equipment
61	111	Props
62	46	Seats
63	49	Seats
64	114	Marquee
65	44	Shop
66	41	Wardrobe dept. office
67	43	Men's rest room
68	1	Tickets and office
69	2	Tickets and office
70	—	Time keeper's office
71	112	Dining dept.

- 72 - Fencing. Entire lot surrounded by metal fence
- 73 - Fencing (extra long 12 wheel wagon)
- 74 - Quarter and queen poles and side wall canvas
- 75 - King (center) poles (king and queen pole wagons are 35 ft. long)
- 76 101 Cage (8 polar bears)
- 77 102 Cage (8 polar bears)
- 78 103 Cage (carries arena and props overland, some bears hifted on arrival)
- 79 108 Cage (foxes, porcupines, wart hop, baboons)
- 80 110 Cage (chimps in glass compartment, living quarters in rear)
- 81 113 Monkeys
- 82 - 2-wheel auxiliary light plant
- 83 - 2-wheel air compressor for stake driving

In addition to the motorized equipment listed above, approximately fifty house trailers are pulled by private autos and trucks. The overland units thus number about 183.

The following equipment and animals are carried on sixteen railway cars leased from the nationalized British Railways:

No.	Type	Contents
1	Baggage car 45 ft.	Elephants
2	Baggage car 45 ft.	Elephants
3	Baggage car 45 ft.	Camels, llamas, sacred cow
4-15	Special 20 ft. horse carriers, specially padded. Sleeper in one end.	Horses (these are 12 small cars carrying 2 horses each)
16	50 ft. tunnel car	Floats: Snow Queen King Midas Wicked Witch Hansel and Gretel Sleeping Beauty

An advance king or center pole erection unit travels a day or two ahead of the show and drives all stakes and puts up the main poles. The unit doubles back and picks up the second set of stakes and poles from the previous stand. This is possible on all major European shows because none do one day stands.

The major English circuses also use a method of driving stakes which differs from that used by American shows. Instead of a motor driven pile driver an air compressor with two air hammers is used. The air hammers fit over the top of iron stakes and automatically drive them into the ground. The air compressor is parked in the center of the tent layout and two man teams carry the air hammers, which are attached to long hoses, around the entire stake line.

The performance of the Billy Smart Circus contains a number of outstanding individual circus acts, but it is the production numbers which provide the Ringling-Barnum flavor and set the show off from its rivals in England and the Continent. Outstanding is the main spec entitled "The Fairyland Fantasy" which opens with the "good fairy" garbed in white and mounted on the show's largest elephant, driving away the "wicked witch" and her special horse drawn float. With a wave of her magic wand and to a great fanfare a magic



New generator truck, one of the largest and most modern portable units in England.

Lot scene showing England's largest big top.



castle arises from the center ring. This is a giant balloon in the shape of a thirty foot high castle. The gates to the castle open and out march a host of fairy tale characters such as Alice in Wonderland, Sleeping Beauty, Jack the Giant Killer and the Giant, etc. Included in the spec are five elaborate horse drawn floats and all fifteen of the show's elephants. Superb costuming and elaborate lightning effects makes this a truly outstanding number.

Mention must also be made of the wild west show which has become a traditional finale for the Smart Circus. This is a western spectacular which is reminiscent of the pageantry last attempted in the United States by the ill-fated Tim McCoy Wild West Show. The latest edition of Smart's western show contains all the ingredients: Indians, U.S. 7th Cavalry, an attack on a covered wagon, and thrilling rescue of the heroine from death at the burning



Old U. S. Army Mack puller truck pulling #41, wardrobe, and #46, seats. Truck itself carries box seat chairs.



Old U. S. Army Mack Diesel puller truck carrying an auxiliary power generator. Billy Smart's Circus has seven of these old World War II "U. S. Army trucks".

stake. Outstanding is the Indian fire dance during which a young lady, dressed as an Indian maiden, runs fiery torches over her entire body and extinguishes a wheel of torches in her mouth.

The actual circus program reads as follows:

1. Opening parade, "The Circus Comes to Town".
2. DeBille's trained polar bears.
3. Three single trapeze acts presented simultaneously: The Roeber Sisters, Les Antinous, and Less Hellyos.
4. The Two Rapolli, sensational jugglers from Czechoslovakia.
5. Liberty horses and high jumping llamas presented by Billy Smart Jr. and Miss Gloria Smart.
6. Musical clowns, The Munoz Luftmann Family.
7. Spec, "The Fairyland Fantasy". Intermission. Candy butchers are not permitted in the seats during the performance and this is the time they make their pitch.
8. The Six Cycling Kludsky, unicyclists who do teeterboard numbers while on their cycles.
9. The Luftmann Family, clown bullfight parody.
10. Aerial ballet with nine girls up on single trapezes.
11. Los Bendichos, flying trapeze.
12. Elephants presented by Billy Smart Jr. An outstanding presentation in an Egyptian Cleopatra theme. The ten largest bulls carry girls dressed in golden Egyptian gowns with black Cleopatra style wigs. Billy Smart Jr. directs the presentation in the costume of a Roman soldier.
13. The De Riaz Troupe presents a trapeze act with two men and a girl performing from a trapeze attached to a small simulated airplane which circles around the dome of the big top.
14. The Atlas-Sahara Troupe of whirlwind Moroccan tumblers.
15. The New U.S. Calvarly Western Show featuring the United States Seventh Calvary.

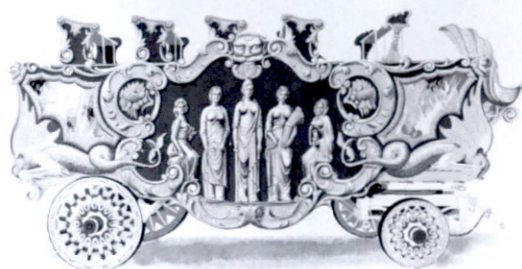
The above program is a truly spectacular circus presentation and for an admission charge that is very low by American standards. Adult tickets for front row box seats sell \$1.75 and prices range down to 62c for the back rows of benches. Children are admitted for about three-fourths the adult price.

A thrilling day at the Billy Smart Circus can be climaxed at the final performance by accepting the invitation printed in the show's program to "see the Big top being dismantled." The speed and efficiency of the tear down provides the viewer with a show almost as thrilling as the main performance. The show attended by this reviewer was over at 7 P.M. (the second show on Saturdays runs from 5 to 7 P.M.) and by 9 P.M. the entire show was on its way to the next city. In every respect the Billy Smart Circus can challenge all others as the largest, most spectacular, and fastest moving show on the road.

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By Don Marcks

It seemed a long time since we had last seen a circus and so it was with great expectations that we were in the railroad yards early on the morning of May 25, 1918, to await the arrival of the Barnum & Bailey Circus from Kingston, N.Y.

The three advance cars had been in town some weeks ago to advertise this day and we had waited patiently ever since. The No. 1 advance car was red, trimmed in yellow with gold lettering; the No. 2 car was blue, with yellow trim and gold lettering while the No. 3 car was olive, with green trim and gold letters.

Finally at 5 a.m. there was a bit of smoke in the distance and then as the train slowly came closer we could hear its whistle and then the First section of the circus train pulled into the yards with its 3 horse cars, 17 flat cars, 2 sleepers and 55 wagons, of which 28 were cages, plus there was also a tractor on one flat car.

The first section had been unloaded and everything was at the lot long before the second section came in at 11 a.m. It seems that there had been some sort of a mishap with a local

freight, thus delaying the arrival of the circus. When the second section came in it was made up of 6 horse-cars, 10 flat cars, 6 sleepers and 26 wagons and a cart.

The third section came in after 11:15 a.m. and this had 6 horse cars; 14 flat cars, 42 wagons, 2 chariots, two tractors and 1 auto that was inside a wagon.

The fourth section came in about 11:30 a.m. and had 6 horse cars, 4 stock cars and 10 sleepers.

With the last three sections in so late and a crowded yard, there was a lot of congestion and delay in unloading the trains. Eventually everything was unloaded and taken to the lot, but with the show being so late they cancelled their parade.

As it was the afternoon show got started about 4 p.m. and they had a good crowd. The night show did start on time and this also drew a good crowd.

On the Elm Street Playground they had the big tent, with 3 rings and 2 stages; the menagerie with only the sidewall up; side show; cookhouse; dining tent, private diningtop; the colored dining tent; dressing tent; wardrobe; band top and a small tent. Down the street on another lot they had the blacksmith shop; ring horse tent and two baggage horse tops, plus a few small tents.

The show has three giraffes which travel in their own special wagons. They also have 20 elephants, 14 camels; 1 baby camel, a baby giraffe, 3 sacred cattle and 2 zebras.

The side show had a two wagon front studded with electric lights. Inside they had a colored band and minstrels; Eddie Masker, skelton; A. F. Lillian, Albino; Jack Wilson, fat boy; Speck Bros., wrestling midgets; Ursa, the bear women; Mrs. Grace Ingalls, levitation; Mme. Abomah, African giantess; Capt. George Auger, giant; Mlle. Nalder, snakes; Princess Wee Wee and Lady Little, midgets; Jim Carver, cowboy giant; Mlle. Clifford, sword swallower; Baron Prince, midget; the Wild Dancing Bushman and Mme. Susitka, tattooed lady.

Just before the night show it started to rain and continued for the rest of



the night. The first section was down and loaded during the beginning of the rain and left town about 11 p.m. The rest of the show on the Elm Street lot, got bogged down in the soft earth and then became congested in trying to load three sections of train at almost the same siding. As a result it was well after daylight before the trains even got started towards the next stand in Boston.

At one time during the night the circus wagons and their teams were lined up on the street from the circus lot to the train, just waiting to get one wagon loaded so each could move ahead a little more.

All of the sleeper cars were painted red this year, the flat cars were yellow with green ends, the horse cars were yellow with red ends while all of the wagons were a bright red.

ON THE BACK COVER

A child's delight, the circus train unloading early in the morning. Oh for the sight of fine baggage stock being unloaded from the stock cars, as shown in this Atwell photo of the Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Real Wild West.

